
Douluo Dalu

V06 – External Spirit Bone

Tang Jia San Shao

036 – Grandmaster's Arrival

Part 1

Dai Mubai puzzled said:

“You are saying, what you shot just now was crossbow bolts? But, where have your crossbow bolts gone to?”

Tang San smiled slightly, indicating another tree behind the first,
“There.”

While speaking, he walked over to that tree. This second tree was still ten metres from the first, as everyone reached him, they only then saw the traces of the bolts the Godly Zhuge Crossbow's launched.

Sixteen crossbow bolts, in two neat rows, completely entering the tree.

Zhao Wuji looked at that tree, taking another look at these bolts,

“Little San, did these crossbow bolts you shot penetrate that previous tree, then again enter this tree?”

Tang San nodded, saying:

“The Godly Zhuge Crossbow's power is very formidable, specialised in breaking spirit power defense. If their defensive power isn't exceptionally tyrannical, the target will be dead in a moment.”

Hearing Tang San's explanation, everyone couldn't help but draw a breath, with such an unreasonable penetrating power, among everyone present, besides Zhao Wuji, all knew they would be unable to resist.

Dai Mubai muttered to himself:

“This thing is too potent, even if I used White Tiger Vajra

Transformation, perhaps I would still be seriously hurt.”

Tang San raised his hand to pat at the tree trunk, relying on Mysterious Heaven Skill to apply Capturing Dragon force, bit by bit shaking a crossbow bolt from within the tree trunk.

This Godly Zhuge Crossbow’s bolts were not easy to make, the ones previously fired into the Man Faced Demon Spider were clearly lost, but these he would hate to part with.

While clapping the tree trunk, Tang San meanwhile said to Dai Mubai:

“The Godly Zhuge Crossbow can be said to be the common soldier’s nightmare. But also, its greatest feature is not its power, but its hidden weapon characteristics of concealment and surprise. As long as it’s loaded, shooting it doesn’t require any spirit power. Even an ordinary person could easily use it. According to my calculations, Spirit Masters under fortieth rank if struck from the front, have very small odds of survival. On non-defense type Spirit Masters it has an extremely powerful restraining effect.”

“Tang San, is all this your research?”

Ning Rongrong asked.

Tang San stared blankly a moment, saying with a wry smile:

“It can be considered so.”

He could never tell everyone that these were techniques he had brought from another life.

Ning Rongrong probing asked:

“Tang San, can’t you sell this thing to me? You can set the price. You know I’m an auxiliary system Spirit Master, without any defensive capability. When everyone’s lives are on the line, besides a bit of supporting spirit ability, I can only watch. If I had this thing, I could also have a bit of offensive strength.”

Tang San let slip a smile, saying:

“Sell what, later I will give you one as a gift. Only, making this thing requires very expensive materials, this material expenditure is on you.”

Right now, the crossbow bolts had already been clapped out of the tree by Tang San, so everyone saw the appearance of the Godly Zhuge Crossbow's bolts.

The bolts were eight cun long, without fletchings, the rear four cun were cylindrical, the front four cun were shaped to a needle point, the front-most three cun had a whole twelve tiny blood grooves, the tip extremely sharp, twinkling faintly with cold light, without any wear from penetrating the tree trunk.

Tang San flipped the side of the Godly Zhuge Crossbow, opening the arrow trough, pushing sixteen crossbow bolts back inside the box one by one.

Oscar had by now already moved over, his face wearing a flattering smile,

“Little San, aren't we good brothers?”

Tang San looked at him and smiled slightly, how could he not understand Oscar's intention,

“Of course, be at ease, I will give each person a Godly Zhuge Crossbow. Just like with Ning Rongrong, you cover the material costs, I will be responsible for making them. However, Making this thing is very troublesome, in one month I can only make one. You mustn't feel anxious. Furthermore, don't easily use it except as a last resort. Making the crossbow bolts is also not easy, and after shooting it's very difficult to recover them. I'm after all only one person, I definitely can't provide more than for all of you to use personally. To say nothing of this Godly Zhuge Crossbow's own extreme potency, its killing power is too great, and it's very easy to cause fatal wounds.”

“Little San, this won't do.”

Zhao Wuji suddenly spoke up.

Tang San looked blank a moment,

“Why, teacher Zhao.”

Zhao Wuji's face revealed a cunning smile, looking at the other students he said:

“These fellows are not persons without money. Making this Godly Zhuge Crossbow of yours isn't easy, it can't be cheap to them. In any case some people don't care about money, so you estimate a proper price to sell it to them for.”

Dai Mubai nodded, saying:

“I agree with teacher Zhao. Little San, if you had to sell this Godly Zhuge Crossbow of yours, how much money would it be?”

Tang San shook his head with a smile,

“Everyone is one of us, there's no need to mention money.”

Dai Mubai said:

“One of us is true. But they also can't let you suffer losses. If one small box is capable of shooting such enormously powerful crossbow bolts, clearly the craftsmanship is exceedingly complex. We cannot always let you tax yourself for nothing. Let alone, after we use this thing, we still need to replenish crossbow bolts. Don't tell me that every time we would have you make them for free? Don't be modest with us. This is proper, this first Godly Zhuge Crossbow counts as your gift to us. We only pay for the materials. If we later need more, you have to sell it to us, how about it?”

Oscar laughed, saying:

“No problem, like this, anyway every month we all have a not insignificant stipend. This thing can save our lives in a crucial moment. Being a bit expensive is of no concern.”

Tang San nodded at this, saying:

“Then fine. Since everyone is interested in this mechanism type hidden weapon, afterwards I will strive to help you all get your own

equipment, after all, one more kind of weapon is also one more kind of guarantee.”

Everyone were clearly very interested in the hidden weapon, of course, this also was greatly related to the effect Tang San produced when using the hidden weapon. After all, on the first day of arriving at Shrek Academy, relying on hidden weapons he put the compared to him more than forty spirit power ranks higher Zhao Wuji at a disadvantage. Let alone these students, even Zhao Wuji was somewhat affected.

Finally they had left Star Dou Great Forest. Out of the forest’s boundary, although they no longer had that fresh and clean air, everyone seemed to be unburdened from a layer of pressure, feeling much lighter.

“We will hurry on again, we can rest at the little town.”

Zhao Wuji said with a smile.

Dai Mubai said:

“If everyone’s condition is no problem to rush a bit, after reaching the small town, I would invite everyone for a drink. Teacher Zhao, this time you can’t decline. If not for your assistance, perhaps we would all be unable to walk out alive from Star Dou.”

Zhao Wuji smiled, saying:

“Little Bai, I know you’re wealthy. Only, my capacity is vast.”

Dai Mubai laughed,

“Teacher Zhao, did you not hear that sentence? My ability to use money to settle matters is no problem.”

Entering Star Dou Great Forest this time, the bounty truly wasn’t small, not only did Oscar succeed in entering the Spirit Elder realm, Tang San and Xiao Wu also equally succeeded in fusing with their third spirit rings. Even more significant was strengthening the cooperation and relationship between everyone. The entire Shrek Academy altogether only had these seven students. Removing

conflicts would be greatly beneficial to everyone's cultivation from here on.

The party rested at the small town for as much as two days. Recovering spirit power and physical power naturally didn't require this much time, but after continuously living in a stretched tight condition the mind needed to relax.

Dai Mubai was extremely grand, paying for everyone's expenses over the two days, everyone also didn't cultivate, each day drinking together and playing noisily, indescribably pleased. Even the always ice cold Zhu Zhuqing's expression softened a lot. Only, she didn't say anything and didn't agree to let Dai Mubai again pull on her hand.

Dai Mubai also didn't push her, after all, she was just a twelve year old little girl. He wasn't anxious.

After two days, everyone once again set off, following the one day's journey they smoothly returned to Suotuo City's Shrek Academy.

"Finally back. Coming home feels truly wonderful, ah!"

Oscar somewhat exaggeratedly shouted out loudly.

Zhao Wuji glared at him,

"Keep your voice down, haven't you seen the sky is dark? Well, you each return to your dormitories to rest. I will go see the dean and report what's happened."

After one day of fast travelling everyone were tired, each walked towards their dorms.

"Tang San, wait a minute."

Tang San was just about to leave with Oscar for their dorm, when Ning Rongrong called out.

Tang San looked blank a moment,

"Rongrong, what's the matter?"

Ning Rongrong bit her lip, saying:

“I want to chat with you alone, can we?”

At Tang San's side, Oscar's expression stiffened at once,

“You chat. I'll return first.”

Since that day he pushed down Ning Rongrong when the Titan Giant Ape attacked, Oscar's originally already dead affection had begun to live again, after all, Ning Rongrong's appearance was beautiful, although only twelve years old, she was still growing into a rare beauty. These past few days as he had paid great attention to her, Ning Rongrong also had not again rejected him, on the contrary getting much closer.

But now Ning Rongrong suddenly said she had to chat with Tang San alone, Oscar in his heart couldn't help but be a bit sour, but also couldn't say anything.

Xiao Wu looked somewhat curiously at Ning Rongrong,

“Rongrong, what do you need little San for? I can't hear it either?”

Ning Rongrong hesitated a moment, but still gave a nod.

Xiao Wu pouted, pulling a face towards Ning Rongrong, and with that ran off towards the dorm.

Dai Mubai, Ma Hongjun and Zhu Zhuqing had just now already returned to the dorms, currently, at the Academy entrance remained only Tang San and Ning Rongrong.

“Rongrong, in the end what is the matter?”

Tang San asked.

Ning Rongrong said:

“Tang San, I want to make a deal with you.”

“A deal?”

Tang San somewhat astonished looked at her. In his heart thinking, ‘don't tell me this Ning Rongrong has returned to her old ways again?’

Ning Rongrong earnestly nodded,

“Although I know you can’t be short on money, but I still very much want to make this deal with you. Only, in this matter I can’t make it on my own. I wanted to first ask whether you were willing.”

Part 2

Tang San, through observations, discovered Ning Rongrong apparently wasn’t going back to her old ways. Her expression was very serious, and even slightly excited.

“Just say it, what is the matter?”

Ning Rongrong said:

“You know that I come from the Seven Treasures Glazed Tile School. Although we are one of the seven big clans of the current age and have a high status, our school’s core students are all support type Spirit Masters. When we meet enemies, we are always the priority target. I think your mechanism type hidden weapons will help us greatly. At least it will let our members have a bit of self defense ability. So, if possible, I hope that, through the school, I can buy a batch of mechanism type hidden weapons.”

So that’s why. Tang San understood Ning Rongrong.

“But I heard Seven Treasures Glazed Tile School had many subsidiary clans and members just for protecting the core students. You even have two powerful Title Douluo. Is it still not enough?”

Ning Rongrong said: “That, after all, is still external help, not belonging to us. Also, no one can promise there won’t be traitors! In the past in our school, that happened once. One of my uncles were abducted by a protector of the school. Afterwards, even though the school set many laws against similar incidents, we’re still passive in any situation.”

Tang San said:

“Rongrong, sorry. I’m afraid I’ll have to let you down. If it was only a few, there wouldn’t be any problem. I should be able to make enough hidden weapons. But for your entire school, there are at least over a hundred core students. I really can’t make that many hidden weapons.”

Ning Rongrong anxiously said:

“It’s quality doesn’t have to be very good. As long as we can defend ourselves. If the quality is worse, can it save some time?”

Tang San looked sternly.

“Rongrong, don’t ever say that again. I either don’t do it, or do it to the best of my abilities.”

Ning Rongrong stuck her tongue out.

“Then there’s no other way?”

Tang San thought for a bit, and suddenly remembered Tang Sect’s old way of operating. If he imitated it, could he....

“There is a way, but I need to think about it carefully before I can give you an answer.”

Ning Rongrong smiled slightly and said :

“That’s fine. Tang San, how about this. Give the first hidden weapon

you make to me. I also need to bring it to my dad for a look. Only my father can decide whether they should equip the core students with your hidden weapons. If it really is ok, you have to ask for a high price, don't be polite. Heehee, I need to go back to sleep. I possibly have to explain to your Xiao Wu as well. Don't worry, I won't make her feel jealous."

Done talking, with a string of laughter Ning Rongrong ran towards the dormitory.

Looking at Ning Rongrong's departing figure, Tang San showed a relaxed smile. Money was a good thing, he naturally wouldn't refuse it. For him, if he wanted to make more powerful hidden weapons, he needed the support of money. Tang San decided to think about it carefully when he got back. He wanted to see if he could bring the Tang Sect's way of business here. After all, making massive amounts of hidden weapons wasn't something he could accomplish alone.

Back at the dormitory, Little Ao wasn't resting. He only laid on his bed, looking at the ceiling. Seeing Tang San enter, he quickly sat up.

"Little San, what did Rongrong need you for?"

Looking at his nervous expression, Tang San couldn't help but laugh on the inside and tease him,

"Nothing much. We only exchanged affections."

"Exchanging affection?"

Oscar's voice became slightly strange.

"Little San, is Xiao Wu really your sister?"

Tang San shook his head.

“Xiao Wu is my adopted sister.”

Oscar said:

“If you already have Xiao Wu, shouldn't you not fight over Rongrong with me?”

Tang San looked at Oscar, amused.

“Didn't you give up already?”

Oscar felt a bit embarrassed.

“But don't you feel after we went to Star Dou Great Forest, she changed a little? She seems not as annoying as before. Also, she's still young, I believe her attitude will definitely get better.”

Tang San also laid down on his bed.

“Then you have to try hard. Don't worry, she talked to me only for business about my hidden weapons.”

Oscar was amazed.

“Really? Then that's great. Little San, you really are my good brother.”

Tang San rolled his eyes,

“Give me a break, go rest. Aren't you tired?”

Closing his eyes, Shrek Academy's friends flashed through Tang San's head one by one. All of these people can be said to be monstrous prodigies. Even their minds were more mature than people their age. Just the thought of Ma Hongjun, at the age of twelve, loitering around brothels, and Dai Mubai with those twins, was unfathomable to Tang San. Was this the early maturing in legends?

After a day of travelling, fatigue was unavoidable. Finally getting back, Tang San decided to allow himself to relax for a day. He didn't start cultivation, but went straight into dreams. A mind that was always tense would actually bring disadvantage when cultivating. Needed rest would benefit the effects of daily cultivations. This was the way of striking balance between work and rest that Grandmaster passed on to Tang San.

In the dean's office.

Flender, full with astonishment, finished listening to Zhao Wuji's description of the journey this time. His expression changed multiple times, and after finally hearing everyone returned safely, he let out a sigh of relief.

"Looks like we were still too careless."

Flender sighed and felt a wave of lingering fear.

"Next time they go hunt for spirit beasts, I will lead the team with you, with two other teachers. These kids are all favored by fate, if they have any accidents, that's equal to ruining geniuses."

Zhao Wuji sat in a seat on the side. He was even more afraid that any accidents would happen. He laughed bitterly:

“This can’t be blamed on you. Who would know that Star Dou Great Forest would become this weird, with this many things happening in the outer edges. They even met the Unrivalled Dragon Serpent couple. The thing I understand the least is the appearance of the Titan Giant Ape. However you look at it, with his ranking within spirit beasts, he wouldn’t lightly come to the outer edges. Good thing Xiao Wu’s fortune is good, or else this time we really would have big losses. Frankly, even if we did what you said and sent four teachers to protect these kids, if we met the Titan Giant Ape we still would have been destroyed.”

Flender nodded.

“But Star Dou Great Forest is the nearest spirit beast habitat. Other than that we have no other choice. But from your explanation, the Titan Giant Ape seemed unhostile and didn’t kill everyone. Or else, even if you used your Spirit Avatar you wouldn’t have been able to block it. Xiao Wu surviving is even more surprising. What is the cow roar she talked about? Don’t tell me that in the Star Dou Great Forest, there is some spirit beast that can raise a response from the Titan Giant Ape?”

“The cow roar was probably from the Skyblue Bull Python^[1].”

A stiff and slightly strange voice came from outside the door. Zhao Wuji was startled. He had already heard the sound of approaching footsteps, but he didn’t really care about it. He only thought it was a teacher of the Academy. Now that he heard the voice, he felt something was wrong. No one in the Academy sounded like that.

“Haha, a familiar person came. Xiao Gang^[2], quickly come in.”

The door opened and a middle aged man walked in from outside. A

stiff face, a perfectly straight back, a first impression of lifeless eyes, but in fact deep in the dark pupils expressing some anxiety. If Tang San were here, he would have recognized the person on first sight, because he was Tang San's Teacher, in the Spirit Master realm famous as Grandmaster

"Come, Wuji, you don't recognize him right? I will introduce you to him. This is my old partner in those days, also Tang San's teacher. You can call him Grandmaster. Almost the entire Spirit Master world calls him that."

Zhao Wuji suddenly remembered something and looked at Grandmaster, surprised.

"So you are Grandmaster. Greetings, I am Zhao Wuji."

Grandmaster's tone was always that flat, his stiff face barely squeezing out a smile.

"Motionless Bright King, you don't have to be polite. You came back, Tang San should have came back with you. Is he safe and sound?"

He only heard Zhao Wuji talk about Xiao Wu being let go by the Titan Giant Ape and didn't hear any previous conversations.

Zhao Wuji chuckled and said:

"He's fine. Our luck is pretty good, everyone came back safe and sound. This time it really was thanks to Tang San. Grandmaster, you indeed brought up a good apprentice. When did you arrive at the Academy?"

Flender helped Grandmaster answer Zhao Wuji's question,

“He arrived the day before yesterday. If not for Tang San, he might have never come. Xiao Gang, sit.”

When Grandmaster heard Zhao Wuji say Tang San was safe, his expression clearly eased. Without being polite, he pulled over a chair and sat down. Zhao Wuji then learned that Grandmaster’s real name was Xiao Gang, hearing this was a little unexpected, but it was also a name brimming with masculinity. He had also heard quite a few rumors about Grandmaster. Although Grandmaster himself looked skinny and lacked strength, his character was famously strong. Once, he abandoned his family for some matters. That was when he met Flender and another person, later creating the famous Golden Iron Triangle^[3].

Part 3

Zhao Wuji was very interested in what Grandmaster said as he entered, and hastened to question closer:

“Grandmaster, just now you mentioned some spirit beast? One unexpectedly able to make the Titan Giant Ape pay attention?”

On Grandmaster’s face was revealed a focused serious expression,

“If Xiao Wu heard a cow’s roar, then, the Titan Giant Ape giving up and leaving her is a very reasonable explanation. Within Star Dou Great Forest, there is not only this one Titan Giant Ape forest king. There is still a compared to him even more formidable existence. That existence is Star Dou Great Forest’s greatest power. If speaking of the Titan Giant Ape as king, then, he is the emperor. This kind of spirit beast is the Sky Blue Bull Python.

Whether it was Zhao Wuji or Flender, both revealed expressions of listening earnestly, also in their hearts secretly sighing in admiration, in terms of knowledge, perhaps no one would be able to compare to this Grandmaster before them. Zhao Wuji also finally understood why he would be known as Grandmaster.

“As everyone knows, for a spirit beast’s strength, apart from its cultivation age, innate talent is also extremely important. Just like us Spirit Master: apart from cultivation level and spirit rings, the spirit’s innate strength also determines future development potential. But among spirit beasts, if dividing spirit beasts according to level, then, the Sky Blue Bull Python and the Titan Giant Ape should both be considered the most super formidable. They possess incomparable innate talent and tyrannical physique. These two existences within Star Dou Great Forest have already surpasses at least fifty thousand years cultivation. Although they still haven’t reached the hundred thousand spirit beast level, their oppressive strength is already sufficient to compare with the Title Douluo among us spirit masters. When their cultivation age reaches a hundred thousand years, then, perhaps they will become existences transcending Title Douluo.”

Zhao Wuji said:

“Grandmaster, I have previously heard of this Titan Giant Ape many times, but this is still my first time hearing the name Sky Blue Bull Python. Unexpectedly it’s even more powerful than the Titan Giant Ape, then what is it capable of?”

Grandmaster sighed slightly,

“Just like no one knows the Titan Giant Ape’s full ability, even less people know what the Sky Blue Bull Python is truly capable of. A Title Douluo once penetrated deeply into Star Dou Great Forest. He was confident in his strength, wanting to have a look at what kind of place the core of this Star Dou Great Forest was like. His strength was indeed formidable, finally entering the deepest part of the forest. Reaching that core, he was astonished to discover, that place unexpectedly no longer was a forest, but a not very large lake. The lake water was clear, surrounded by forest, like a fairyland.”

Lake? Zhao Wuji looked astonished at Grandmaster, Flender had a somewhat pondering expression.

Grandmaster continued:

“Just next to that little lake, the Title Douluo saw a spirit beast

drinking water. But this spirit beast was actually the Titan Giant Ape you encountered this time, that Title Douluo seeing the Titan Giant Ape was greatly excited, he had always heard it was a kind of formidable spirit beast existence, and immediately intended to start a fight with the Titan Giant Ape. But, in the end he couldn't compete with the Titan Giant Ape, because he in less than a moment already lost his head out of fear and escaped that place."

"Why? Because of the Sky Blue Bull Python?"

Zhao Wuji had opened his eyes wide.

Grandmaster nodded,

"Precisely because of the Sky Blue Bull Python. As that Title Douluo prepared to fight, suddenly, the little lake before him boiled, and immediately afterward, he saw an incomparably enormous bull head^[4] stretch from below the surface, incomparably immense pressure making that Title Douluo unable to help being shocked. The bull headed python bodied spirit beast slowly separated from the surface, revealing its hundred metre long huge body. At that time it was evening. This whole blue-green spirit beast hissed at the sky. In the sky the moon's radiance seemed to be swallowed by it. But what truly scared that Title Douluo was that this Sky Blue Bull Python unexpectedly spoke human words, saying to that Title Douluo, 'human, your cultivation becomes difficult, leave this place.'"

Zhao Wuji and Flender looked at each other, Flender couldn't help saying:

"How have I never heard of this before?"

Grandmaster coldly glanced at him,

"There are still very many matters you don't know about. Do you know how the Titan Giant Ape behaved when the Sky Blue Bull Python appeared? Before the Sky Blue Bull Python it would display a fearful expression. But that Sky Blue Bull Python at that time, from its mouth issued an ear splitting bull roar. Consequently, from what Xiao Wu said I can determine that Titan Giant Ape certainly heard the Sky Blue Bull Serpent's call, putting down everything in its hands,

hurrying to meet it. The reason why the Sky Blue Bull Serpent is not as well known as the Titan Giant Ape, is because it very rarely leaves the pool at the core of Star Dou Great Forest. But this matter was related to the spirit master world by that Title Douluo. Still its existence is known only by a small number of people, and I am precisely one of them.”

“So it was like this. It appears that Xiao Wu’s luck truly is good.”

Grandmaster said:

“Teacher Zhao, I carefully read these current students’ records, this time you left for Star Dou Great Forest in order for that food system Spirit Master child to look for his third spirit ring, I do not know what spirit beast’s spirit ring he obtained in the end?”

Zhao Wuji chuckled, saying:

“This time our luck wasn’t bad, it could also be considered robbing the fat from other peoples’ mouths, Oscar that kid obtained a thousand year Phoenix Tail Crest Serpent’s spirit ring, possessing a pretty good third spirit ability.”

“A thousand year Phoenix Tail Crest Serpent?”

The muscles in Grandmaster’s rigid face changed at once,

“This truly is very good. Originally I had anticipated several kinds of spirit rings suited to this food system child, but I never expected this child would obtain a spirit beast result so good. The Phoenix Tail Crest Serpent’s disposition is relatively gentle, but extremely cunning, most expert in fleeing, its cultivation is not easy. If my conjecture is correct, Oscar’s third spirit ability is certainly related to speed.”

Zhao Wuji with a sigh of admiration said:

“Worthy of being called Grandmaster, you are correct, this third spirit ring of Oscar’s is related to speed. His third spirit ability is a kind of mushroom sausage, after eating it one can maintain flight for one minute, flying at the same speed as the Phoenix Tail Crest Serpent.”

Grandmaster seemed shocked, clearly he had not anticipated the spirit ability Oscar obtained would be like this. He resolutely said:

“This child’s food system spirit talent is unprecedented, the most outstanding of all the food system spirit masters I have met. His future prospects cannot be measured.”

Flender smiled darkly, saying:

“This Shrek Academy of mine has always accepted only monsters. Did you just find out now? Unfortunately, this is the last class. These seven children are the Academy’s last disciples, I certainly must foster them into people worthy of respect. This time with your help. We brothers working with a common purpose, in less than ten years, we will certainly let the word Shrek shake the Spirit Master world.”

Grandmaster unhappily glared at Flender,

“If not for little San, I wouldn’t remain here. Flender, don’t forget what you promised me. In the future when little San hunts spirit beasts you must personally accompany him.”

Flender said:

“This is easy. Only, we still must wait for him to reach fortieth rank.”

Grandmaster was an astute person, his seemingly expressionless eyes released a flash of light, staring fixedly at Zhao Wuji, saying:

“Teacher Zhao, don’t tell me little San also already reached thirtieth rank?”

Zhao Wuji nodded, saying:

“I also just thought to ask Grandmaster whether the change on little San’s body was ordinary.....”

At once, he repeated what he previously told Flender, telling Grandmaster in even more detail about the events of this time entering Star Dou Great Forest.

Grandmaster listened very attentively, without overlooking a single word of what Zhao Wuji said. In his eyes all along expressed a

pondering light.

Although Grandmaster's disposition was calm, as Zhao Wuji spoke of Tang San several times being in danger of death his expression couldn't help but transform, especially hearing Zhao Wuji say Tang San absorbed that two thousand year cultivation Man Faced Demon Spider his expression changed greatly. No one understood more clearly than him how grave the consequences were of absorbing a spirit ring surpassing one's limit, that was practically certain death.

Once Zhao Wuji had finished everything he had to say, Grandmaster slowly released a long breath,

"Little San this child's willpower is stronger than I had imagined. I didn't expect that he would be able to endure like this. This child's prospects are perhaps even more outstanding than I had estimated."

Zhao Wuji said:

"The reason why Tang San was able to persevere is perhaps related to Xiao Wu. A person's willpower will sometimes be affected by external circumstances. I can reach the conclusion that Xiao Wu in Tang San's mind has an extremely important position."

Grandmaster nodded,

"You're right, it's very possible this is the reason. However, this is still greatly related to his own willpower. Tang San this child's will is precocious, already far exceeding his peers'."

Zhao Wuji said:

"Grandmaster, what is after all going on with the eight spider legs that appeared on Tang San's back? Those don't seem at all a result of the spirit ring. He has a Tool Spirit, how could he himself transform? If it wouldn't be spirit ring variation, perhaps it's spirit variation?"

Grandmaster said:

"Right now I still don't dare be certain of what his condition is. Spirit ring variation is impossible, spirit beasts' spirit rings are invariably

fixed. Although bringing different results when combined with different spirits, the spirit rings themselves will not have too great changes. Tang San already obtained a spirit ability, the spider legs appearing on his back should not be bestowed by the spirit ring. As for spirit variation, it's not impossible. But I do not believe this is the case."

Notes

1. (天青牛蟒) "Sky Blue/Green Cow/Bull/Ox Python"
2. (小刚) "Little Firm"
3. (黄金铁三角)
4. Possibly related, Ox Head (牛头) is one of the two guardians of the underworld in Chinese mythology, along with Horse Face (马面)

037 – Blue Silver Grass’ Post-Evolution Might

Part 1

“Generally speaking, spirit variation is set from birth, consequently, when the spirit awakens, if the spirit is already varied, it will exhibit. Receiving post-natal influence and generating spirit variation is really too rare. Tang San’s spirit is Blue Silver Grass, its weakness leading to him absorbing any spirit ring comparatively easily, and won’t cause too great rejection. Although the Man Faced Demon Spider was powerful, it still wouldn’t cause this kind of spirit variation condition. Most importantly, his Blue Silver Grass spirit hasn’t disappeared and can still be released, from this point I can conclude it really isn’t spirit variation.”

Flender said:

“Then what’s going on? These spider legs would never appear without reason. Wuji just now also said, on these spider legs is added the Man Faced Demon Spider’s poison. If used appropriately, it can be considered a kind of weapon on its own, and still a very surprising one.”

In Grandmaster’s eyes twinkled a light, abruptly standing up,

“I must personally see the circumstances of these spider legs, to decide what they are after all classified as.”

Flender waved his hand to Grandmaster, saying:

“Let it be, those children have only just returned, finding Tang San again tomorrow is not too late, let him have a rest.”

Grandmaster hesitated a moment, at last still sitting back down in his seat,

“If it truly is like I estimate, then, this time Tang San’s harvest in Star

Dou Great Forest was too great. Even better than the spirit ring he acquired.”

Flender started,

“You are saying…….”

Grandmaster nodded,

“But I still can’t be certain, if it truly is like this, then, I promise you to stay here.”

Flender laughed,

“Good. Then I look forward to your stay. We brothers are at last able to be together again. It’s a pity, she isn’t here.”

Hearing Flender speaking of that ‘her’, Grandmaster’s face changed minutely, frowning,

“Flender, don’t mention her, I don’t want to quarrel with you.”

Flender somewhat helplessly shrugged,

“Fine. I don’t want a quarrel either. Only, I truly wish you will stay. For all these years, I could be considered spending all my effort towards Shrek Academy, I have now finally decided to close the Academy, I hope this last batch of students are able to give me the perfect ending. With you here, this has all become likely.”

From Flender’s eyes, Grandmaster saw a bit of weariness, the expression on his rigid face couldn’t help but soften a bit, nodding,

“We can speak of that again tomorrow once I’ve seen little San.”

Flender said to Zhao Wuji,

“Wuji, you’re also tired after hurrying for one day. Go rest at once. Thank you for your troubles this time.”

Zhao Wuji smiled slightly, saying:

“The Academy also isn’t just you alone, if we were not full of hope for this place, and fond of this kind of tranquil life, who would remain

at this place for so many years? We have all spent our heart's blood for this place, you need not speak politely. Grandmaster. Flender. I'll leave first."

Finished speaking, Zhao Wuji stood up and left Flender's office.

Flender all along followed Zhao Wuji's departure with his eyes. In his eyes displayed some gratitude,

"Were it not for the help of these old brothers in these years, perhaps I long ago would have failed to support the Academy. Once this batch of students have graduated, I will also properly relax, travelling to every place on the Continent, relaxing my mind. Xiao Geng, when that moment comes will you go together with me?"

Grandmaster looked blank a moment, shaking his head,

"I don't know."

Flender sighed,

"Although I know you don't want to recall the past, I still can't help but to say, those days we lived together, was something I cannot forget in a lifetime. That memory was the happiest time in all my life. If we could always keep living so happily and carefree, it would be great, ah!"

Hearing Flender's words, something appeared in Grandmaster's eyes, lowering his head, he indifferently said:

"People will grow old, and all will mature. Since past matters are already in the past, what's the point in speaking of them? Only seeing the past, speaking easily, what can it really achieve?"

Flender sighing shook his head,

"Xiao Gang, your character is too strict. If you agreed to soften a bit, perhaps, right now you also wouldn't have this appearance. You truly couldn't accept her? After all, that wasn't her mistake. Furthermore, do you truly care about such worldly opinions?"

"Shut up."

Grandmaster's mood suddenly became agitated, shouting loudly, both eyes firmly glaring at Flender,

"Don't mention her before me again. And you? What about you? After so many years, why aren't you together with her? Don't tell me you didn't like her. If it was like that, why are you still unmarried, still insisting on this Shrek Academy? This was just a joke on her part, that's all."

Flender's gaze gradually chilled,

"Xiao Gang, you are still so stubborn, in all these years you haven't changed. Right, I admit it, I like her. However, the one she truly likes is you. A noble person will not forcibly seize a person's love, even more, in my heart, both of you are always my best friends. I can't forget her, but, I also will never move on her, I only want to recall the past, nothing more. Isn't it good to be free and unrestrained alone like this?"

Grandmaster abruptly stood from his seat,

"Free? Bullshit, what I wanted was for you to bring her happiness. I didn't expect that after all these years, seeing you again, you to tell me you only want the memories. If I was able, I wish I could kill you right now."

Flender sighed,

"Xiao Gang, Don't get agitated. I know, at that time you chose to leave for the sake of us three. For the past many years, always without messages from you, just didn't want to trouble our lives. But, she only likes you, even though between you was that kind of relationship, she only likes you. We both love the same person, don't tell me you let me go force her, forcing her into matters making her unhappy? Perhaps if she would agree like that, but, in all her life she wouldn't be happy. These years, I always tried to find you, she as well. Before she left, I told her, I would always be her eldest brother, forever willing to act as her eldest brother. She never forgot you, and never gave up that sincerity in her heart, don't tell me, you couldn't....."

Grandmaster smiled, on his rigid face that smiling expression nevertheless made people feel cold,

“Me and her, is it possible? If it was possible, would I wait until now? If it weren’t for that special relationship between us, do you think I would give her to you? I wouldn’t. I couldn’t care about common peoples’ opinions, but I can’t let her bear them together with me. Flender, if you still are my brother, don’t inform her about me, otherwise, I will immediately leave this place, never meeting you again.”

Flender also seemed angry,

“Then you have the heart to see her always painfully search for you, to see her alone all her life?”

Grandmaster’s gaze was somewhat sentimental,

“Twenty years, a whole twenty years, it’s all already late. Right now I only hope to foster little San into a great person, matters of emotions I already do not dare expect. At that time I left like that, don’t tell me you believe she would still forgive me? In this life of mine, I have never before been afraid of anything, but, right now I’m truly afraid, I’m afraid to confront her. Honestly, when I found you this time, when I didn’t see her at your side, I was secretly somewhat delighted, but when I sobered, I discovered my heart was only empty. I lack the ability to repay her. I don’t have the courage to face her.”

“You.....”

Flender stared at Grandmaster, for a long time unable to speak a word,

“Forget it, this is all your own matter. I won’t let her know you’ve appeared. But if there comes a day when she finds you, Xiao Gang, hear my words, do not run away again. If you still are my brother.”

Grandmaster didn’t promise, but, Flender saw the rims of his eyes had already reddened, he understood the suffering in Grandmaster’s heart, right now didn’t say anything more.

“Have you returned home?”

Flender changed the topic.

Grandmaster shook his head,

“Since long ago I already didn’t have a home.”

Flender sighed,

“That is after all your home. Even though they don’t welcome you. But.....”

Grandmaster waved his hand, indicating Flender shouldn’t say more,

“Even if I wanted to return, I still wouldn’t return like this. Without first having my proof, I will not let those people laugh at me.”

On Flender’s face suddenly revealed a smile,

“Apparently, your heart truly is completely placed on Tang San. Did you know, for little San, Wuji was even beaten up.”

Grandmaster smiled, this time his smile was no longer cold,

“Although I didn’t know, I can guess. That person, couldn’t be offended by you.”

“You know?”

Flender started, his gaze at Grandmaster immediately became somewhat strange.

Grandmaster pulled out a token tile from his chest and tossed it to Flender, on the surface six distinct insignia immediately appeared before his eyes.

“He gave me this. Flender, know that what you right now see of little San, is not all of him. His true potential is still far, far from being unearthed. Don’t tell me you believe that his spirit really is just Blue Silver Grass? If it was like that, how would he still become my disciple?”

Flender was shocked in his heart,

“Don’t tell me his spirit also has a variation?”

Grandmaster shook his head,

“No, it really isn’t variation, just twins, that’s all.”

“What?”

.....

Filling the night, tonight’s night sky brought several faint spirits, as if giving the night mist a layer of muslin, giving people a kind of mist covered water hazy sense of beauty.

When the night washed away, as the distant day showed its first hints of white, a dorm’s door quietly opened.

Being tired wouldn’t affect a lifetime of habit, Tang San quietly walked out of the dorm. Even though the day still seemed very dark, he liked this time every day the most.

Because this was dawn, it was a beginning, a brand new beginning. Every time, he felt himself seem to completely awaken, everything being that beautiful.

Behind talent was great effort, without assiduous cultivation, even talented Spirit Masters still couldn’t accomplish much. Behind Tang San’s formidable surface was already more than ten years of great effort.

Practiced leaping onto the house, only this time Tang San nearly fell off the roof. Because just when he jumped onto the roof, he happened the see a person sitting there alone, burning gaze staring fixedly at him.

At dawn, a person’s mind would be very relaxed, and Tang San was no exception, therefore he hadn’t at all carefully listened to his surroundings, just would jump from fright.

The person on the rooftop caught Tang San by one shoulder, pulling him to sit down at his side, the other hand making a gesture for him to sit silently.

After shock came exultation, Tang San immediately recognized, this person sitting on the roof was precisely Grandmaster.

“Grandmaster, when did you arrive?”

Tang San pleasantly surprised asked.

Part 2

Tang Hao had left Holy Spirit Village when Tang San was seven years old, leaving behind only a letter. And ever since had faded away without news. Grandmaster filled this gap of affection, although he wasn't a person adept at expressing himself, Tang San obtained immeasurable care and affection from him. If not for Grandmaster and Xiao Wu, Tang San's character definitely wouldn't be like right now. To him, in this second life, besides his father, they were the most important people.

Rubbing Tang San's head, this was Grandmaster's customary action,

“I said I would come find you here. I arrived several days ago, learning you had left for Star Dou Great Forest. However, you also gave me a surprise. I didn't think you could so quickly break through the thirtieth rank pass.”

Tang San smiling said:

“Isn't that because you taught me well?”

Grandmaster's expression suddenly dropped,

“Then did I teach you to absorb spirit rings from spirit beasts with unknown age?”

Tang San was distracted a moment, immediately understanding Grandmaster already knew the danger he'd been in, and somewhat awkwardly shook his head,

“No.”

Grandmaster sighed,

“Then you still dare act rashly? Did you forget I told you how dangerous the Man Faced Demon Spider was? If this time you ended badly, how should I explain it to your father? You are my only disciple, and also my hope. Without my permission, you cannot die, understand?”

Although what Grandmaster said wasn't pleasant to hear, how would Tang San who was familiar with him not hear the concern and fear deep in his words? Teacher feared his danger, the corners of Tang San's eyes heated, respectfully lowering his head,

“Teacher, I was mistaken.”

Grandmaster glared at Tang San for a long time without uttering a word. After a long time, sighing, he said:

“Little San, do you know, you have an unusually severe weak point. This weak point might in the future put you in a crisis.”

“What is it? Tell me, I will certainly change.”

Tang San hurriedly said.

Grandmaster shook his head, saying with a wry smile:

“Although this is a weak point, it's also a merit. You put too much importance in emotions. This time, if it was not for Xiao Wu being kidnapped, you also wouldn't so arbitrarily have forced absorption.”

Tang San at this understood Grandmaster's meaning, for a moment he was speechless. Grandmaster wasn't wrong, if not for Xiao Wu, he absolutely wouldn't have been so impetuous. But that time, Tang San's mind had already lost the majority of its ability to make judgements, in his heart only thinking to as far as possible go to bring back Xiao Wu.

Once again rubbing Tang San's head, Grandmaster's gaze once again became mild,

“My reprimands today, I hope you will remember, at all times calmly reflect. Even if it's your most important person appearing in danger, you must be even more calm. Only after first saving yourself will you

have the opportunity to save others. Most importantly, you can't impetuously settle problems. Do you understand?"

Tang San hurriedly nodded,

"Teacher, I will remember."

Grandmaster smiled slightly, extremely pleased with this obedient disciple, saying:

"Go, we'll go outside the Academy. Let me have a look at what you gained from being impetuous this time."

Tang San was ecstatic, he also just thought to ask Grandmaster just what was going on with the changes to his body.

The two master and disciple jumped off the roof, and without alerting anyone, quietly left the village, reaching the little grove outside the village.

Grandmaster raised his hand and made a gesture towards Tang San. After many years as master and disciple, Tang San naturally understood his meaning. Urging the spirit power within his body, he released his spirit.

Blue silver light sparkled, quietly a cover of Blue Silver Grass rose in Tang San's surroundings, moving rhythmically at Tang San's side.

Grandmaster attentively watched the Blue Silver Grass Tang San summoned, mumbling:

"The Blue Silver Grass is slender, looking even glossier than before. Apart from the original tea fragrance, it also has a faint sweet fishy smell, should be the Man Faced Demon Spider poison permeating it. With the toughness of the Man Faced Demon Spider silk, although your Blue Silver Grass has become slender, it should be even more durable than before. Little San, twine that tree over there, try pulling it with your full strength."

"Yes."

Tang San raised one hand, one Blue Silver Grass shot out like lightning, between eyeblinks already twisting around a large tree ten

metres away, both hands simultaneously exerting, using Mysterious Heaven Skill with all his might.

That tree was thicker than a person could reach around, but under Tang San's pull, the thick tree trunk began to gradually bend.

Grandmaster walked over to the tree, carefully observing the Blue Silver Grass twisting around the tree trunk. Along with Tang San's effort, the Blue Silver Grass was already gradually carving into the tree bark. A layer of faint smoke rose from where the Blue Silver Grass was in contact with the tree trunk. It could clearly be seen the Blue Silver Grass was gradually penetrating deeply within the tree trunk. Along with Tang San's effort, deeper and deeper into the complete width of the tree trunk.

"Good, you can stop."

Grandmaster gestured to Tang San.

Tang San at this relaxed Blue Silver Grass, the strand of grass twining around the tree trunk swiftly withdrew like it was a snake, itself appearing without a trace of change.

"Little San, come and see."

Grandmaster called Tang San to his side.

"The degree of Blue Silver Grass' toughness has clearly increased, although it has become slender, under the full strength of your more than thirtieth rank spirit power, it hasn't the slightest indication of being stretched apart, in other words, your spirit power is insufficient to break the Blue Silver Grass. Furthermore, the additional poison on Blue Silver Grass has clearly improved, if you used the Ghost Vine's added poison, the result should be even better. Besides the original poison type, now it also has corrosive poison. This belongs to the Man Faced Demon Spider."

Tang San looked in the direction of Grandmaster's finger, the area where the Blue Silver Grass previously twisted had deep grooves about two cun^[1] deep, around them were a burnt black color, although along with Blue Silver Grass' withdrawal it already no longer shed smoke, the severity of the supplemental corrosive poison on

Blue Silver Grass could still be seen.

“Teacher, Blue Silver Grass’ toxicity has increased a lot, currently it roughly has spirit power paralysis, neurological pain and corrosion three major effects. For ordinary Spirit Masters relying only on spirit power to resist will already be very difficult. Especially after this highly corrosive poison is added, when piercing the opponent’s skin, it will allow the other two poisons to display even greater effect. Adding to its own toughness leading to binding even tighter, the effect is clearly amplified.”

Grandmaster said:

“Although this time absorbing the Man Faced Demon Spider’s spirit ring had enormous risks, the risk is directionally proportional to the rewards. Looking at Blue Silver Grass’ own growth alone is already fairly astonishing. But also, your physical strength and speed have both increased not inconsiderably. The rewards are not bad. However, I still must once again remind you, you must not make the same mistake a second time. I absolutely do not want to see a scene of the white haired carrying the black haired^[2].”

Tang San chuckled,

“Teacher, I know. Hereafter I would not again be impetuous.”

Grandmaster nodded and smiled, saying:

“Come, release your third spirit ability for me to see.”

Tang San nodded, looking around in all directions, choosing a location between two trees. Right now, releasing the three spirit rings moving rhythmically over his body.

Under the push of Mysterious Heaven Skill, the third spirit ring suddenly flared, bright purple light permeating his whole body, drowning out the light of the other two rings of light.

Grandmaster gratified nodded to himself, at the same time also somewhat envious, after all, this third spirit ring was something he had desired all his life but could never achieve.

Tang San with a focused and serious look raised his right hand, in his palm strong blue light released, spirit power releasing all over his body, intangible pressure making the short shrubs around him tremble.

Part 3

“Go.”

Following Tang San's low shout, the blue light seen in his palm abruptly flourish greatly, a mass of blue-green light left the hand, flashing through the air, in an eyeblink swelling to a diameter of about five meters and flying forward.

Along with the blue light gathering, Grandmaster was able to see that blue light's true form.

That was an enormous spider web, rings within rings, extremely fine meshed, the entire spider web was woven from Blue Silver Grass, only these Blue Silver Grass were even a bit thinner than the Blue Silver Grass Tang San directly released before, furthermore appeared a crystal clear blue.

The spider web expanded, as it touched the two trees it tightened in a moment, forming a large net suspended in the air. The five meters in diameter large net suspended there, twinkled with a blue gleaming lustre under the dawn light's illumination.

Tang San's complexion after releasing this spider net had clearly become somewhat pale, evidently the reason was the great effort he used. This was Tang San's third spirit ability, Spider Web Restraint^[3].

“Little San, tell me your thoughts about this spirit ability.”

Grandmaster while carefully observing the spider web adhering to the two trees, simultaneously asked Tang San.

Tang San said:

“After I absorbed the Man Faced Demon Spider's spirit ring, this

spirit ability appeared. According to what I sensed of this spirit ability, it has several properties. First, because it's formed from Blue Silver Grass, it possesses all the properties Blue Silver Grass does. Poison and durability both. Second, the spider web itself has a kind of sticky property. It possesses extremely powerful adhesion, if touching it even a bit, it will immediately bind, tightly restraining the target. Third, the spider web itself is released instantaneously, with my current spirit power, launching this spirit ability once requires the consumption of a third of my spirit power."

Grandmaster's brows wrinkled,

"Only this? Aren't there still other properties?"

Tang San said:

"There is still the most important one, it's the spider web's own durability, it's directly twice that of Blue Silver Grass. Later using this spirit ability, its area as well as usage frequency and toughness, all will change as my spirit power increases. In other words, the tougher Blue Silver Grass is, the tougher this spider web will become. Blue Silver Grass' toxicity will also be within it."

Grandmaster nodded,

"This is suitable. What's your opinion on this spirit ability?"

Tang San said:

"Although it wouldn't appear very wonderful, I feel this ability is unusually practical. It has a very powerful effect on my spirit's control power. Spider web with twice the toughness of Blue Silver Grass isn't so easy to struggle free from."

Grandmaster smiled slightly, saying:

"No, you are still underestimating it. It's use is not only that simple, moreover it's an exceptionally powerful spirit ability. How would you breaking the limit to absorb the Man Faced Demon Spider still give you an insufficiently tremendous spirit ability? I can practically be certain, unless it's encountering an opponent just right to counter your ability, otherwise, on the same level, or even if it's a spirit

master within ten ranks higher than you, no one would be able to throw off its restraint. With it, you can be considered as having a truly powerful position among control system Spirit Masters.”

Seeing Tang San’s with like a ponderous gaze, Grandmaster continued:

“When Spirit Masters fight one on one, the most powerful isn’t physical strength Spirit Masters, nor is it power attack or even agility type Spirit Masters. Rather it’s control system Spirit Masters. Because a control system Spirit Master is able to restrain the opponent’s movements, maybe even stopping the opponent’s actions, under these kinds of circumstances, as long as the other side is unable to throw off your control system spirit ability, how will they still attack you? In the Spirit Master world, control system Spirit Masters are always terrifying existences. It’s only since control system Spirit Masters generally need comrades in arms to coordinate with, they’re not very well known. But truly formidable spirit masters all know the true importance and power of the control system.”

Tang San said:

“Teacher, you are saying, if in one against one conditions, right now Spirit Masters under fortieth rank would be unable to throw off my Spider Web Restraint?”

Grandmaster nodded, saying:

“Basically so. But still don’t rule out exceptions. This world is equal. Every spirit also has their advantage. Originally were you not also thinking your Blue Silver Grass was a trash spirit? In the same way, although this third spirit ability your spirit added is already unusually powerful, at the same time it has a nemesis.”

While speaking, Grandmaster from his chest pulled out a simple thing, slowly walking over below the spider web Tang San previously released.

In Grandmaster’s hand was a torch, he flashed it against the wind, immediately a flame puffed out from within the torch. Grandmaster

burned the torch below the spider web, using the flame to roast the net.

Just at the start Tang San still didn't see anything. But in a moment, he clearly saw that extremely durable spider web's lowest thread begin to gradually melt in the flame.

"I understand. You are saying the nemesis is fire."

Tang San suddenly realized, at the same time recalling the first time he met Ma Hongjun. At that time Ma Hongjun effortlessly dissolved Tang San's Blue Silver Grass Binding just by relying on his Phoenix flame. Although later he still got the worst of it, he still made Tang San's Blue Silver Grass a useless spirit.

Grandmaster nodded, saying:

"Whether it's plants or your spider web, they themselves fear fire. The flame burning on this torch is very small and naturally insufficient to threaten the spider web. But, if you encounter a Spirit Master expert in using fire, then, your spirit will be completely restrained by the other side. Practically every control system Spirit Master has something classified as their weakness, this is also the greatest cost of a control system spirit compared to other attribute spirits. And your Blue Silver Grass' weak point is just fear of fire. As a result, hereafter when you meet Spirit Masters with this kind of property you must be sure to be even more careful."

Tang San pondered, saying:

"Teacher, then if when I hereafter again obtain spirit rings do my utmost to think of a way to add spirit rings with resistance to fire, will this erase the weak point?"

Grandmaster said:

"Don't do that. Although that kind of thing will increase your Blue Silver Grass' flame resistance, consider, if you would waste even two spirit abilities on flame resistance, then, after your spirit power thereafter reaches a certain degree, will you still have enough spirit abilities to contend with your opponent?"

“But, if I don’t increase the flame resistance, when I later encounter Spirit Masters with this kind of spirit wouldn’t I lack any methods?”

Tang San said doubtfully. He didn’t fail to understand Grandmaster’s meaning, but his spirit having such a large defect clearly wasn’t something he wanted to see.

Grandmaster smiled calmly, saying:

“Control system spirit masters very rarely act alone, the best method is to let your companions take your place to deal with these issues. Of course, you also aren’t without your own methods to deal with it. Aren’t you always playing with those hidden weapons of yours? Although in my opinion toys lead to loss of purpose, I also have no choice but to admit that your hidden weapons truly have astonishing power. Moreover, don’t forget, you don’t only have the one Blue Silver Grass spirit.”

By Grandmaster’s reminder, Tang San immediately recalled that hammer of his, his heart leapt,

“Teacher, you are saying that I can cultivate that hammer?”

Grandmaster resolutely shook his head,

“Out of the question. Remember, without my consent, you absolutely cannot add spirit rings to that hammer. Definitely cannot. This is extremely important to your future. Right now what you can rely on is only Blue Silver Grass.”

Although he didn’t understand why Grandmaster insisted on this, Tang San still nodded his promise.

Grandmaster said:

“Little San, don’t bite off more than you can chew. To you, even more important is still upgrading spirit power. The spirit abilities Blue Silver Grass currently possess already surpass my expectations. In the future you will only become even stronger. You are Teacher’s hope, you understand? Good, now let me have a look at your most significant matter, the question in your heart. Take off your jacket first.”

Tang San's heart tightened, ever since leaving Star Dou Great Forest, without the threat of spirit beasts, Tang San had all along wondered what was going on with those eight spider legs on his back. Now meeting Grandmaster, he naturally impatiently wanted answers. Regarding spirits, spirit beasts and spirit rings alone, he was convinced there was no one who knew them better than his Teacher.

Removing his jacket, Tang San turned his back to Grandmaster. Grandmaster walked up to his back, raising his hands to touch Tang San's spine.

Tang San only felt a warm and gentle spirit power flow into his back, immediately afterward, this force began to flow up and down his spine.

With a very serious expression, he carefully examined every vertebra in Tang San's spine.

"Little San, after you withdrew those spider legs, could you feel them go somewhere?"

Tang San turned his right hand to his back, pointing at his rear ribs, saying:

"Fitting on these eight ribs, I can feel like they adhere to the ribs. But to my body there is no effect whatsoever. On the contrary it feels like my back strength is even a bit larger than before."

Grandmaster touched the places Tang San indicated, immediately discovering that not only did these eight ribs appear a bit thicker and more solid than the other ribs, but at the same time, the vertebra these eight ribs connected to were also somewhat thicker than the others, feeling not only solid, but also extremely tough. Even Tang San's back muscles seemed somewhat tougher.

A pleasantly surprised expression gradually appeared on Grandmaster's face, but he didn't say anything, only quickly drew back several steps, moving five meters away from Tang San's back,

"Use your spirit power, release those eight spider legs."

Circulating Mysterious Heaven Skill, right now Tang San couldn't help but be somewhat nervous, after all, this was his first time releasing these monstrous spider legs of his own accord. Honestly speaking, although he felt these spider legs would improve his strength, Tang San didn't have any fondness for them. He always thought that by having these eight spider legs he seemed to become monstrous.

Grandmaster was unable to take his eyes off Tang San's back, afraid to let any details slip by.

Faint blue light began to appear at Tang San's back. Immediately afterward, Grandmaster clearly saw, Tang San's entire spine seemed to move outside his body, releasing a weak purple light, just now he took notice of purple light releasing especially clearly on several of the vertebra. Immediately following, the tips of eight ribs protruded from Tang San's back, taking the shape of eight bulges.

A little bit of soreness or stinging tickling appearing on his back made Tang San feel slightly out of sorts, but he didn't stop his spirit power.

Notes

1. 2寸 = 6.7 cm
2. Idiom: Parents seeing their child die before themselves.
3. (蛛网束缚)

038 – External Spirit Bone

Part 1

Tang San discovered that the change on his back didn't use up too much spirit power. It seemed those vertebra themselves contained a certain energy.

Following the eight bulges protruding, the purple light on Tang San's back also became more and more distinct.

Suddenly, along with a burst of Tang San trembling, the eight bulges finally broke open, eight thick and solid purple pillar shapes swiftly extended from his back.

If Tang San's Shrek Academy companions were here right now, they would discover that this time the spider legs' growth speed was much faster than last time.

In practically only several eyeblinks, the spider legs had already extended at least a meter and a half. Immediately afterwards, the spider legs abruptly extended again. From the tip joints on those one and a half meter thick and solid spider legs abruptly ejected one and a half meters longer, showing the sharpest part.

Tang San couldn't help but make a low howl, the eight spider legs on his back simultaneously unfolded on either side of him, dull purple light glinting, like eight enormous arms protecting him in the middle.

On the surface of the spider legs could be faintly seen a layer of purple gas, purple light moving, appearing transparent like purple crystal.

"Good."

Grandmaster gasped in admiration,

"Little San, control your spider legs to stab a tree, use strength."

Although to Tang San his spider legs still seemed unfamiliar, he could still manage just piercing a tree. Leaning sideways slightly, on his left side a spider leg abruptly shot out.

With a pu sound, Tang San was amazed to discover, the spider leg like it hadn't hit any obstruction, effortlessly thrust into that tree large enough that a single person could wrap his arms around it, and pierced through the other side.

An even more astonishing scene followed. Along with the spider leg skewering it, Tang San and Grandmaster both clearly saw a layer of purple quietly spreading from the spider leg over the tree, spreading widely across the tree trunk with astonishing speed.

Not just the tree trunk quickly became purple. In a moment, even the branches and tree leaves became the same color.

One by one tree leaves dropped from above. Before they even fell to the ground, already in midair they transformed into wisps of purple dust and faded away unseen. And that large tree melted away more like ice and snow, just like that quietly transforming into purple powder and dissolving. Even on the ground in the vicinity of the tree some bushes coming into contact with this purple powder successively became purple and disappeared, within a circumference of several meters, completely turned into a purple deathly stillness.

A faint energy transmitted along the spider leg into Tang San's body. Although the energy wasn't much, it was very distinct.

Last time after Ma Hongjun was poisoned by touching the spider legs, Tang San also had a similar feeling, only that time it was even slighter, and he also hadn't paid much attention. This time it was extremely obvious. It was like that spider leg had absorbed the tree's accumulated energy and transmitted it into Tang San's body.

The purple dust falling to the ground gradually became colorless. In a moment it already blended together with the soil, no longer visible, and that large tree was like it had previously never existed there. Tang San's thrust out spider leg still maintained its previous position, but there already was only empty air.

“This, this actually is.....”

Tang San looked stupidly at the spider leg. Although he had already guessed the spider legs’ attack power would be pretty good, he hadn’t expected the toxicity of these spider legs would be so terrifying.

Grandmaster slowly walked over next to Tang San, moving around his spider legs,

“It appears my estimate was correct. Little San, this time your gain was the greatest. It’s not the third spirit ring, it’s even less that third spirit ability Spider Web Restraint, but these eight spider legs, or perhaps to say, it’s this external spirit bone.”

“External spirit bone?”

Tang San looked at Grandmaster.

Grandmaster nodded,

“These years I always taught you how to differentiate spirit beasts and spirit rings, as well as spirit cultivation methods and every kind of application, always without speaking of knowledge pertaining to spirit bones. This is mainly because I never thought you could come into contact with spirit bones so early. It appears, right now is the time to give you a lecture relating the mysteries of spirit bones. Saying this, let’s first talk about what spirit bones are.”

At Grandmaster’s indication, Tang San controlled his spirit power to withdraw those eight spider legs within his body. Just like last time, withdrawing these spider legs consumed a large amount of Tang San’s spirit power, sharply differing from releasing them.

Grandmaster sternly said:

“Spirit bones are a kind of extremely unusual thing. One might say, they are something Spirit Masters most hope of obtaining in their dreams. Somewhat analogously to spirit rings, spirit bones also come from spirit beasts. But they also possess enormous differences from spirit rings. First, the probability of spirit bones appearing are only one in a thousand, or even less, generally

speaking, only with extremely formidable strength, and also when the circumstances of killing the spirit beast has some special circumstances is it possible for spirit bones to appear after killing, not at all like how a spirit ring will appear from every spirit beast. Consequently, spirit bones have become extremely uncommon, and extremely precious.”

“Another difference between spirit bones and spirit rings is that it doesn’t require like spirit rings for whoever kills the spirit beast to use it. After obtaining spirit bones they can even be traded. Do you still remember, I told you before, you must as much as possible save up some money. The purpose is to in the future in a somewhat peculiar place purchase the spirit bones you need. Any spirit bone, even if it’s common spirit bones, is still extremely expensive. Moreover they lack markets.”

Tang San said:

“Then how should spirit bones be used? Your meaning is, these eight spider legs on my back are eight spirit bones?”

Hearing Tang San’s words, Grandmaster couldn’t help but smile,

“Don’t be greedy. Let alone eight spirit bones, to be able to have one spirit bone is already extremely fortunate, to say nothing of yours still being an external spirit bone. Its value is practically comparable to first rate spirit bones. This spirit bone of yours is vertebra, of course, also related to eight ribs. Its effect is precisely storage for the toxin of that Man Faced Demon Spider you killed, furthermore duplicating its eight spider legs and afterwards integrating them with your your own capability, evolving into these present eight spider legs.”

The Man Faced Demon Spider’s spirit ring combining with your spirit somewhat promoted all aspects of your body. Blue Silver Grass’ toxicity also increased a lot. But, that after all isn’t the Man Faced Demon Spider’s own poison. But your eight spider legs are different. Not only possessing the Man Faced Demon Spider’s toxin, even still giving rise to a certain variation. Just now you also saw its super strong corrosive effect. If this pierced the human body, what would happen?”

Grandmaster speaking of this, entirely appeared somewhat excited,

“Little San. I ask you, how many spirit rings is a Spirit Master capable of obtaining at most?”

Tang San said:

“Nine, obtaining nine is the limit, that is a Title Douluo.”

Grandmaster nodded,

“Then if everyone had nine spirit rings, furthermore the age difference was negligible, how do you decide who is more formidable?”

Tang San pondered, and said:

“It depends on what both sides’ spirits are, how good their control, also depends on both sides’ actual combat experience ratio, all things put together can decide who is a bit stronger.”

Grandmaster nodded, saying:

“You are correct. You clearly remember the things I taught you. Then, I can now tell you, under circumstances where both sides are equal, if one person possesses a spirit bone, then, everything you just now said doesn’t necessarily count, because the Spirit Master possessing a spirit bone holds the absolute advantage.”

“Ah?” Spirit bones have such great effect?”

Tang San somewhat shocked looked at Grandmaster.

Grandmaster nodded, saying:

“Spirit rings add spirit abilities. Although also somewhat improving the Spirit Master’s own capabilities, their main purpose is after all to add spirit abilities. But spirit bones happen to be the opposite. Spirit bones might not add abilities, but the improvement to the Spirit Masters themselves is tremendous. Even more importantly, the growth capability spirit bones possess make them even more valuable than spirit rings. The abilities spirit rings add will all improve along with the growth of spirit power, this you are familiar with. But

you should also know, the spirit rings' age limit will restrict their growth. Even if it's a ninetieth ranked or higher Title Douluo, his first spirit ring ability still won't grow to a sufficiently formidable level, this principle, but spirit bones are different. Spirit bones will not be restricted by the age of their spirit beast, and will only evolve along with the Spirit Master's own strength. In other words, the earlier spirit bones are obtained, the more time it will have to evolve."

Tang San said:

"A person's body has so many bones, if one could absorb that many kinds of spirit bones into oneself, wouldn't it be countless changes....."

Grandmaster shook his head, saying:

"Although there are many bones in a person's body, they are subdivided into a few larger sections. Therefore, generally speaking, one is also only able to absorb a few types of spirit bones: four limbs, head and torso. In other words, an ordinary person would be able to absorb six spirit bones, just like a Spirit Master is able to absorb nine spirit rings, the quality of spirit bones as well as effect on the Spirit Master, mainly depends on how early they're absorbed and whether their properties are compatible."

Tang San suddenly understood:

"Then this spirit bone I got from the Man Faced Demon Spider is undoubtedly compatible with me, belonging to the torso class of spirit bones, right?"

"What you said first is very correct. The spirit bone's methods are most suitable to you, precisely obtained from the same spirit beast as one of your spirit rings. But this spirit bone of yours isn't part of the torso class, that's why I said it's an external spirit bone."

Tang San curiously asked:

"Then what is an external spirit bone?"

Grandmaster very patiently explained:

“External spirit bones are a kind of miraculous existence, a special existence apart from the six main classes of spirit bones. If speaking of the probability of common spirit bones appearing from spirit beasts as one in a thousand, then, the probability of external spirit bones appearing isn’t even one in ten thousand. Moreover are the prerequisites for absorbing the external spirit bone, you must first absorb the spirit ring of the spirit beast this spirit bone came from. What we call torso class spirit bones ordinarily indicates the breastbone. But this spirit bone you absorbed is nevertheless the vertebra. From what I previously observed, I can deduce that it’s an external spirit bone. Child, do you know, in the Spirit Master world, to Spirit Masters, the most precious things have a ranking, called a Spirit Master’s dream ranking. Within it, external spirit bones have always occupied the Spirit Master’s dream ranking’s second place. Second only to the first rank, the practically impossible existence of the hundred thousand year spirit ring.”

Grandmaster used the easiest to understand method to tell Tang San just how precious these monstrous eight spider legs of his were.

“These eight spider legs are truly so formidable?”

Tang San couldn’t help but be secretly doubtful.

Grandmaster had spoken so much, his mouth was somewhat dry,

“It’s early morning weather, first put on your clothes. Remember, what I told you today of external spirit bones you must not by any means tell anyone else. Although external spirit bones can’t be absorbed like common spirit bones, as the saying goes ‘the most outstanding tree in the forest, is certain to be ravaged by the wind’. The fewer people who know you possess an external spirit bone the better, to avoid someone coming after you out of jealousy.”

Part 2

Tang San put on his clothing, asking Grandmaster:

“Teacher, then after all what use does my external spirit bone have?”

Grandmaster said:

“What concrete uses it has I can’t presently say. I must study it for a time to get a clear sense. Starting from today, adding to your cultivation assignment, is then to as quickly as possible master the use of the external spirit bone. From seeing the condition just now, this external spirit bone possesses extremely powerful attack power, not only piercing, but also extreme toxicity. If my thoughts are correct, then you should be able to control the poison on the spider legs. Possibly discharging according to your intentions. At the same time, with those eight spider legs’ length, haven’t you thought of how to use them to move around instead of your pair of legs?”

Tang San was an astute person, with Grandmaster raising the point he immediately understood,

“If it’s like that, not only speed would increase, but also the effect of terrain on movement speed would substantially decrease.”

Grandmaster smiled slightly, saying:

“Therefore, these eight legs provide you with the capability to move unhindered by terrain. As for its advantages, you will hereafter see even more surprises. Furthermore, it will still evolve along with each time you advance a spirit ring, the power will even exceed your imagination, with it, you currently already have a chance when fighting opponents within a ten rank difference of you. Moreover, because external spirit bones are uncommon, only if you tell them yourself would anyone know these eight spider legs are spirit bones, most will only believe they’re one of the manifestations of your Blue Silver Grass. After all, apart from its hardness, its exterior is still extremely similar to Blue Silver Grass. As for later being able to control to what degree it manifests depends on your own effort. If you can let those eight spider legs become like eight highly toxic lances moving like the fingers of your own hand, one can imagine to what degree your fighting strength will grow.”

As Tang San and Grandmaster returned to Shrek Academy, the sky was already bright, Grandmaster had today said a lot relating to spirit bones, although it was only an overview, Tang San still had to gradually digest this information.

“Little San, go eat breakfast. Starting from today, I will rearrange a cultivation plan for you.”

Tang San raised his head to look at Grandmaster,

“Teacher, will you leave?”

It seemed to him that Grandmaster giving him a planned cultivation method, might be because he had to leave. His heart couldn't help but drop.

Grandmaster smiled slightly, saying:

“Be at ease. Teacher isn't leaving. I still fear problems will arise as you practice with your external spirit bone. This external spirit bone is already a part of your body, completely fused together with your vertebra. In the event issues appear, it's very possible they're fatal. Therefore, I can only remain here.”

“Teacher isn't leaving? That's truly great.”

Once Tang San heard Grandmaster was staying and guiding his cultivation, he couldn't help but be elated.

Grandmaster's face revealed an anticipatory mood,

“Little San, do you know, right now I very much want to see your appearance in twenty years. My decision to stay behind is also not just for you. There still are those academy companions of yours. Each of you can be described as geniuses. If you don't have a suitable cultivation method, wouldn't it be a waste? Although Flender has a lot of experience with cultivation, in very many details he still isn't sufficiently good. I hope that from here on you will be able to become a formidable group. Therefore, from now on I must use the most refined cultivation methods to guide you.”

To Tang San, the reason Grandmaster stayed wasn't at all important, the key point was that he had decided to stay, this alone was sufficient.

The teacher and disciple pair reached the Academy dining hall. Whether it was because rushing yesterday was too exhausting,

although currently in the dining hall breakfast was already prepared, there wasn't a soul in sight.

Tang San hastily ladled two bowls of congee for him and Grandmaster respectively. Shrek Academy wasn't well off, so breakfast naturally wouldn't be lavish. Today's breakfast was very simple: steamed bread, a vegetable dish, congee, and for each person one egg.

Seeing Tang San bring his breakfast, Grandmaster frowned.

"Flender gives you this to eat?"

Grandmaster's rigid face looked somewhat sinister.

Tang San said:

"This is already very good, ah. Steamed bread until you're full. Compared to my childhood it's much better."

"A farce."

Grandmaster set aside the steamed bread in his hand, anger bubbling up, his character strict as always,

"To you growing children right now is an important time. The body is the capital of the spirit. Without a good body, how can you persevere with intense cultivation, this breakfast is sufficient to people at my and Flender's age, but to you children it's still far from enough."

While Grandmaster was getting angry, Flender's lazy voice reached them from outside,

"I say, Grandmaster, it's all very well for you to talk like this, you also know these children are all growing. Do you know how much they eat in one day? Buying exotic delicacies at Suotuo City, how could the financial condition of the Academy permit me to give them luxury foodstuffs to eat, if you want to sponsor it, I have no objections."

Along with the voice, Flender walked in from outside.

Seeing him, Grandmaster's complexion eased somewhat,

"No matter the Academy's difficulties, since I've decided to stay, as

a teacher here, I absolutely cannot let the children suffer. Flender, give me full authority to handle this matter. From hereon what each of these childrens meals are, leave it to my discretion.”

Flender laughed in his heart,

“Why, Xiao Gang, you’ve decided to stay?”

Grandmaster nodded,

“Whether it’s for Tang San, or for these little monsters you’ve recruited, I’ve decided to stay here for a time. In these two days I’ve also easily found out about your current teaching methods, there are many areas that have to be improved. That day you said to me, as long as I wish to stay, you would give me authority. True?”

Flender understood Grandmaster only too well. Seeing his appearance, he already understood the vast determination of this old brother of his, although nothing showed on his face, in his heart already cheerfulness blossomed. Grandmaster’s theoretical knowledge. That could be unrivalled under Heaven. Immediately, for fear that Grandmaster would change his mind, he at once delightedly said:

“No problem, you only have to first tell me what you’re doing. The Academy’s teachers will follow your allocation. Of course, if you need to spend money you have to first tell me. The Academy’s financial situation is still lacking compared to your imagination.”

Grandmaster frowned slightly, saying:

“I know these people of yours are all proud and aloof contemporaries, but can’t you be flexible in some way to increase revenue?”

Flender stared blankly, laughing in spite of himself:

“Someone as rigid as you still knows flexibility?”

Grandmaster’s gentle gaze looked at Tang San by his side,

“For these children, what is a bit of flexibility?”

Flender laughed,

“All right, as long as it doesn’t violate my integrity doctrine, you can be as flexible as you wish.”

After breakfast, the bell sounded punctually, all the students gathering on the Academy grounds.

Today seemed especially bustling, not only did two heads Flender and Zhao Wuji come, in addition Grandmaster and the Academy’s other several teachers also all arrived on the grounds.

Besides the two heads, the Academy originally still had three teachers, the three in charge of the three entrance exams. Tang San was only familiar with one of them, that old man who at that time had used a staff spirit to scare away a lot of people.

“Good. Everyone’s present. Next I have some matters to declare.”

Flender walked over before the seven students, his gaze solemnly sweeping across the seven.

“First. I will give you newly arrived four students an introduction to the Academy teachers.”

Speaking, Flender indicated the one Tang San had already met, the Long Staff Spirit old man.

Part 3

“This is teacher Li Yu-Song^[1], spirit Dragon Pattern Stick^[2]. Sixty third ranked Spirit Emperor.”

Indicating the second, even older, seemingly over seventy years old man, saying:

“This is Lu Ji-Bin^[3], spirit Star Luo Chess^[4], sixty sixth ranked Spirit Emperor.”

The last teacher’s was a bit younger than the previous two, seemingly about the same as Flender.

“This is Shao Xinshao^[5]. Spirit Sweet Pea^[6]. Seventy first ranked Spirit Sage, food system Spirit Master. Teacher Shao is among the food system Spirit Masters I know of, absolutely ranked in the top five powers.”

If the first two teachers weren't astonishing enough, then, a seventy first ranked food system Spirit Sage appearing made the four newly arrived students simultaneously shocked. That teacher Shao didn't look tall, only roughly the same as the twelve year old Xiao Wu, even a bit shorter. Small eyes, large nose, unprepossessing, but who could have expected, he unexpectedly was such a highly ranked food system Spirit Master? Seventy first ranked food system Spirit Sage. Whether it was at Spirit Hall or any one Spirit Master clan, it would be a venerated rank anywhere.

The three teachers after Flender's introduction nodded towards the students. Respectively, the first teacher Li's face was wooden, the second teacher Lu following wore a smile. Finally that teacher Shao, the expression on his face was somewhat strange. His gaze all along fell on Oscar, the gaze even somewhat obsessive.

Finally, Flender walked over next to Grandmaster, grasping Grandmaster's shoulders, saying:

“Lastly this, I must carefully introduce to everyone. He, precisely relying on his research, arriving at the Ten Great Spirit Competences, regarded as the best in spirit theory, the wisest Spirit Master, at the same time also Tang San's Teacher, Mister Yu Xiao Gang^[7]. Of course, he also is my old brother. We've already known each other for several decades. Perhaps you won't understand too clearly by hearing his name, but I think you should all have heard his title. Hereafter, you can call him Grandmaster.”

Hearing the word 'Grandmaster', everyone couldn't help but be shaken, gazes one after another turning to Tang San, even if they didn't know of Grandmaster, but able to instruct such an outstanding disciple as Tang San, how could he not be an excellent teacher?

Tang San was equally somewhat astonished. Because, this still was his first time learning Grandmaster's name. Grandmaster had never spoken it before, he naturally also didn't ask. As it turned out his

Teacher was called Yu Xiao Gang.

Flender said:

“Starting from today, Grandmaster has full authority over you teachers and students, we will all coordinate with Grandmaster. You returned just yesterday, I think everyone is still comparatively tired. Today you have a one day vacation. Tomorrow class will resume again. This time in Star Dou Great Forest, we had three people reaching the Spirit Elder realm. Still not broken through thirtieth rank Ning Rongrong, Ma Hongjun and Zhu Zhuqing, you must also work hard, strive to overtake the others’ pace. Grandmaster, what do you have to say?”

The last inquiry was directed at Grandmaster.

Grandmaster nodded, face as stiff as always, looking at the seven students gathered, indifferently saying:

“The Academy only has you seven students. In my opinion, you are also one entity. I have already seen your records. Later I will draw up some focused education methods. Apart from coordination, I do not wish to hear any different voices. Whoever it is, I will treat everyone equally. Since you are the students of Monster Academy, you must be more monstrous than common Spirit Masters, hereafter making everyone when speaking of you only think of the word ‘Monster’. Starting from now, you seven will not like before be split into initial and high rank sections, but undergo a completely unified education. I will rank you according to age. First, Dai Mubai. Second, Oscar. Third, Tang San. Fourth, Ma Hongjun. Fifth, Xiao Wu. Sixth, Ning Rongrong. Seventh, Zhu Zhuqing.”

Grandmaster’s gaze swept across everyone,

“Good. You can disband now, gather here early tomorrow. In addition, I do not want to see anyone absent at breakfast. Otherwise, you will receive special drills.”

Resting for one day was good of course, however Grandmaster’s arrival, also made the students somewhat curious and apprehensive.

Gaze following the teachers successively departing, Oscar standing

at Tang San's side, said in a low voice:

"Little San, it appears this Teacher of yours is even more difficult to deal with than dean Flender, ah!"

Tang San smiled slightly, saying:

"Teacher's work is always meticulous, as long as everything is done strictly according to his instructions there will not be any problems."

Dai Mubai smiling said:

"Besides me and little Ao, you five are all the same age, I didn't expect little San to be little three^[8], and little Wu to be little five^[9]. This is an unexpected coincidence."

Fatty smiled mischievously, saying:

"Three little sisters, let's hear you say fourth brother^[10]."

Xiao Wu shot him a cold glance, holding out her hand, saying:

"No problem, bring me a red envelope^[11], I'll say it at once."

Fatty stared blankly,

"This....."

Ning Rongrong cut him short,

"Fatty, as long as your strength can match third brother's^[12], I will call you that."

Zhu Zhuqing's was the most succinct. Looking at Ma Hongjun with a cold gaze, only saying two words:

"Make me^[13]."

"Let it be. I'll endure."

Fatty somewhat gloomily waved his hand.

"Isn't there someone going into the city? It's not at all easy to get a rest day, I'm going to stroll in Suotuo City."

Dai Mubai holding back for these days was also somewhat exhausting, however through the trip to Star Dou Great Forest, the relationship between him and Zhu Zhuqing had with great difficulty eased somewhat, naturally he wouldn't wreck his just now established image. Raising his head to gaze at the sky, his appearance like it was no matter of concern to him.

Oscar yawned,

"Not going, I'll go back to sleep. Finally at thirtieth rank, in the future I can idle a bit."

The three girls all glared at Ma Hongjun. They clearly knew this Fatty going into town was nothing innocent. Just then, Tang San suddenly spoke up:

"I will go with you."

Fattys eyes brightened, stealthily glancing at Xiao Wu whose expression had subtly changed,

"Old San^[14], you are also enlightened?"

Tang San stared blankly,

"What enlightened? I have to go find a smithy and see if I can hire two ironworkers to make some things. Otherwise I'll have to equip each of you with my strength alone, that would take forever, ah!"

Ning Rongrong giggled,

"I knew third brother wouldn't be as dirty as you."

Xiao Wu's expression stealthily recovered to normal,

"I'll go with you."

Tang San shook his head with a smile, saying:

"Let it be. I'll go on my own. This time you also suffered a lot. Rest at the Academy. I'll be back very quickly."

Xiao Wu didn't insist, nodding agreement.

Fatty unhappily looked at Ning Rongrong,

“Who are you calling dirty? I’m settling the issue of the Evil Fire, this is by the dean’s special permission. Little San, we’ll go.”

Tang San said with a wry smile:

“One moment it’s old San, another it’s little San, can’t you settle on one?”

Fatty smiled mischievously, saying:

“Then I’ll still call you little San, you are just two months older than me, that’s all. Let’s go.”

He was apparently already somewhat impatient, pulling Tang San towards the Academy exit.

Looking at the two people departing, Ning Rongrong whispered by Xiao Wu’s ear:

“Aren’t you afraid your little San will be led astray by Fatty? If it was me, I would definitely follow.”

Xiao Wu smiled slightly, saying:

“Men always need a little freedom. Besides, I’m not at all convinced little San can be led anywhere by Fatty.”

Ning Rongrong said with a smile:

“Look at you, so proud of yourself. A close couple hoping for love is I, your servant’s,^[15] wish for big bro and little sis^[16].”

Xiao Wu’s charming face reddened, raising her hand to lightly scratch Ning Rongrong’s underarm,

“Don’t speak nonsense. I and little San have a sibling relationship.”

Ning rongrong cackled, teasing while running towards the dorm:

“All right, you need not flaunt it. I know you are siblings. The kind of siblings more intimate than blood siblings.”

“Annoying.”

Xiao Wu was never gracious enough to suffer a loss, immediately laughing and chasing after. The two girls were in the same dorm, naturally also ran in the same direction.

Oscar yawned and went back to the dorm. Dai Mubai's gaze then fell on Zhu Zhuqing,

"Zhuqing."

Zhu Zhuqing raised her head to glance at him,

"I'm going to cultivate."

Finished speaking, she turned to leave.

Dai Mubai in one big stride blocked Zhu Zhuqing's way,

"Couldn't we chat properly? I remember, you weren't like this as a child."

Zhu Zhuqing's face revealed a sneer,

"You then? Are you still like when you were a child? Twins, humph."

With a cold snort, she turned and walked away. Although she spoke a bit more than a few days ago, that ice bound gate still firmly rejected Dai Mubai.

Looking at Zhu Zhuqing's quick departure, Dai Mubai didn't chase after her. On his face revealed a wry smile,

"Don't tell me this is my deserved retribution? To think I, the distinguished young master Dai, would have such a day, ai. Retribution. Perhaps it's truly retribution."

Dai Mubai had never spoken with others about the relationship between him and Zhu Zhuqing, but if there hadn't been any relationship between them, even if Zhu Zhuqing had been even more beautiful, how would the always arrogant Evil Eye White Tiger lower his voice like this?

.....

Suotuo City. Once in town, Fatty swiftly left Tang San, going to settle

the issue of his Evil Fire. On the way he naturally numerous times enticed Tang San, hoping to pull him astray. However Tang San clearly had a resolute will, without anything distracting him. The gap with a twelve year old's willpower was still immense.

Suotuo City was bustling as usual, currently in the morning, the shops had already opened for business, the crowd bustling with activity a sharp contrast with the tranquility of Shrek Academy.

Tang San's goal for this trip was very simple: to find a suitable smithy. Although he rested early last evening, he had still considered Ning Rongrong's proposal. If it was only for himself, then, his strength alone was sufficient to produce enough hidden weapons, but if he had to supply other people, then his own strength was clearly not enough.

Notes

1. (李郁松) "Plum Elegant Pine"
2. (龙纹棍)
3. (卢奇斌) "Cottage Surprisingly Refined"
4. (星罗棋) That is Star Luo as in Star Luo Empire.
5. (邵鑫邵) No feasible translation other than the inclusion of a name particle indicating "prosperity"
6. (糖豆)
7. (玉小刚) "Jade Little Firm"
8. San (三) means three, it's a pun.
9. Xiao Wu (小舞) is a homonym to (小五) "little five". It's puns all the way down.
10. Si ge (四哥) "Fourth [older] brother", he wants them to address him as a senior. I will use "brother" and "sister" when they use their internal ranking with sibling suffixes, and occasionally mention whether it's an older or younger sibling.
11. A red letter would contain money, either as a gift, a bonus or a bribe

12. San ge (三哥) "Third [older] brother" is Tang San.
13. Literally "win against me in a fight"
14. (老三) or "old three" or "third oldest". It's a pun shower.
15. Ning Rongrong uses qie (妾), a deprecatory self reference for women - practically the diametrical opposite of "I, your father"
16. She uses very familiar terms for older brother and younger sister (a ge 阿哥, a mei 阿妹)

039 – “Iron” Smithy

Part 1

Originally when Tang San was at Tang Sect, he was specially in charge of making hidden weapons, and before he leapt from the cliff he had already reached the rank of outer sect manager. He was extremely familiar with the manufacturing process for Tang Sect hidden weapons. Tang Sect's income relied practically exclusively on the outer sect's manufacture of poison and hidden weapons, after Tang San carefully reflected, he decided to copy this method to Douluo Continent. Although some of this was already somewhat difficult, it was still possible to try it out.

Thus, Tang San decided to take advantage of today's holiday to find a smithy to cooperate with.

Entering the Spirit Elder realm, as long as he again underwent the rank test next month when he went to Spirit Hall to draw his stipend, Tang San would each month have a hundred gold coin income. As blacksmiths were a low rank occupation hiring them was cheap, he believed he was able to afford it. Furthermore with all the hidden weapon manufacturing costs split among everyone, money was no problem.

The reason why he made the resolution to find a smithy to cooperate in making mechanism type hidden weapons, was because Tang San decided he had to make several kinds of even more powerful hidden weapons. This world was after all different from his previous world, all the materials had to be collected by himself. Making even more powerful hidden weapons naturally required even more time and effort.

Of course, Tang San certainly wouldn't tell others the craft of making Tang Sect hidden weapons, he only needed to contract a smithy to make hidden weapon components, doing the final assembly himself was sufficient to maintain secrecy. More than the smiths being

unable to copy, whether they could even make what Tang San wanted was impossible to know.

After asking several passers by, Tang San finally found his destination, the largest smithy in Suotuo City. This smithy's name was very simple, just called 'Smithy'^[1], without any additional words.

Without entering the smithy, he could already hear the intensive hammering noises, the sound concentrated and melodious. Clearly there were numerous blacksmiths working.

From its external appearance, this smithy was clearly much larger than the one Tang San worked at in Nuoding City. Easily five or six times larger than Shi San's smithy. In the wide anteroom were laid out various kinds of finished products arranged by type, divided into three large areas: everyday implements, weapons and armor, respectively.

Of these, everyday implements occupied roughly half the area, the remainder split equally between weapons and armor. The store's anteroom was separated from the main work area by long black curtains, the curtains were three meters wide, with a white one meter in diameter 'iron'^[2] character, looking very imposing.

In the shop's anteroom were six or seven assistants in charge of receiving customers, meeting those arriving and sending off those departing. The division of labor was extremely clear. Some were in charge of receiving customers and doing business, some were in charge of delivering finished goods. Furthermore a tall and sturdy middle aged man sat behind a counter responsible for collecting money.

Tang San stepped inside the shop, heading directly to the counter.

A shop assistant hurried over to meet him, obstructing Tang San,

"Young mister, what do you require?"

Tang San smiled inwardly. A mister was mister, but they still unfortunately added the word 'young'. Although his height still approached an adult's, a childish face showed he was a youngster.

“I want to talk about a business deal.”

Tang San said with a smile.

The assistant sized up Tang San several times. Tang San's clothes were very plain, made from cloth without anything special. Appearance average. Stature well built. Looking like an ordinary person.

“If you want something made, you can speak directly to me.”

Tang San said:

“You might be unable to, this is a long term deal, if possible, a permanent collaboration.”

While speaking, Tang San took out a paper from his chest,

“Can you read this?”

That was a hidden weapon component design diagram. When Tang San made hidden weapons himself, he also required advanced drawings, carefully measured and calculated to later be able to make. It wasn't something anyone could remember in their head.

The assistant took the plans and with only a look was nonplussed. On the plans were drawn several complicated designs, let alone reading it, he couldn't even understand what this thing was.

“This.....”

The assistant once again looked at Tang San, then said:

“I will trouble you to wait a moment. I will consult the shopkeeper at once, to see whether it is something we could make.”

Finished speaking, he immediately turned and ran for the counter.

The sturdy middle aged man behind the counter quickly took the drawing handed over by the assistant. In a moment, his face was already filled with an astonished expression, saying something to the assistant, he came out from behind the counter and was led by the assistant to Tang San.

“Young man, did you bring this plan? I can’t see why you would want these things made. Could you explain it?”

Tang San said:

“You don’t need to know what they’re needed for, I only want to know whether you can make them. They must be made from the highest quality refined iron, ideally forged from iron essence^[3].”

The middle aged man frowned,

“I’m the boss of this shop. I’m called Tie Xin^[4]. Young man, do you know the price of iron essence? Adding to the manufacturing cost that is no small amount, you’d best ask the adults of your family to come speak.”

Tang San’s heart suddenly shifted, from the middle aged man before him he could feel the fluctuations of spirit power. Unexpectedly the boss of this smithy was a Spirit Master?”

“Of course I know the price of iron essence, I won’t hide it from you, I’m also a smith. Only I’m simply not strong enough, I can’t make this many things by myself, therefore I’ve come to you here. The price of iron essence, by weight, one kilogram of iron essence is ten gold spirit coins, sure enough. With the the scale of your place, I trust you should be able to refine iron essence.”

The middle aged man nodded, saying:

“You have the price right. But you should know that the toughness of iron essence is far higher than common refined iron, so forging it is naturally much more difficult. When using it to create any goods, the cost of processing it is equal to the price of the iron essence itself. In other words, to use one kilogram of iron essence to forge anything, we have to charge ten gold spirit coins for processing expenses. And the objects on this schematic of yours are also so complex, we must still charge another fifty percent.”

If an ordinary person was here, hearing the smith speak of forging something unexpectedly weighing the price in gold coins, would certainly be greatly shocked. But Tang San knew that the price this boss Tie Xin spoke of was already unusually fair. In his heart his

favourable impression immediately increased.

“Uncle, your price is no problem. If the quantity I need made is comparatively large, is it possible to have some discount?”

Although Tang San wouldn't haggle too much, he would still strive for a necessary discount.

Tie Xin muttered:

“Certainly. If you order iron essence to forge these things, even if it's our biggest customer, the material cost can't decrease, I can't lose money. But I can strike off ten percent of the labour cost for you. If your order of iron essence exceeds ten kilograms, then I can go down to eight tenths. The lowest I can go is also eight tenths.”

Tang San nodded straightforward, saying:

“Then it's decided. I will trouble you to make ten according to the plans I gave you. I already calculated it in detail. Each one should require roughly two kilograms of iron essence. Altogether it's twenty kilograms.”

Tie Xin looked startled at Tang San,

“You want so many? This is indeed twenty kilograms of iron essence. Including labor costs it's five hundred gold spirit coins. Even if I give you the labor cost for eight tenths, it's still four hundred forty gold spirit coins.”

Seeing Tie Xin's appearance, Tang San understood he was afraid he didn't have that much money.

“Uncle, you are also a Spirit Master.”

Tang San suddenly said.

Tie Xin's heart trembled, looking at Tang San frowning.

Tang San said:

“I would like to speak with you alone, is it possible?”

More than four hundred gold spirit coins of business, even if it was

this Suotuo City's largest smithy, it was absolutely a large deal. One must know, their whole yearly turnover was only roughly three thousand gold spirit coins.

Tie Xin nodded, saying:

"Then please follow me in the back."

At once, he brought Tang San to walk towards the back.

Passing through the separating curtains, Tang San immediately saw an astonishing scene. This smithy's anteroom was already very large, but this rear work area was even larger, as far as the eye could see, filled with a deep furnace fire red. At least fifty smiths were working simultaneously.

Tang San's Purple Demon Eye was exceptionally acute, gaze simply sweeping across these smiths, in his heart secretly nodding. Although the smiths here were not all so robust, whether it was their expressions or their hands they were all extremely calm. Clearly all were senior smiths. Able to support this large smithy, also required the existence of this many outstanding smiths.

Suddenly, Tang San made a small expression of surprise, thinking out loud:

"Why are you also here?"

Tie Xin stopped walking, puzzled looking at Tang San,

"Young man, is there a problem?"

From in his heart, Tie Xin didn't have confidence in Tang San, after all he looked like he was too young. But the plans Tang San provided did not have the appearance of a joke. Furthermore, this was a more than four hundred gold spirit coins large order, Tie Xin couldn't let it slip by because of his suspicions. Although they were Suotuo City's largest smithy, they were in no way the only smithy.

Following Tang San's gaze, what Tang San took note of were two young smiths in the middle of their work. They appeared to be eighteen or nineteen years old, both had leopard eyes, appearing

extremely similar, powerfully built, tanned muscles rising like small hills. The forging hammers in their hands were also much larger than other smiths', forging extremely steadily, even to the extent that they were more efficient than some of the middle aged smiths around them.

Part 2

Tie Xin saw Tang San taking note of them, and couldn't help but chuckle proudly, saying:

"Those two kids are growing stronger and stronger now. How about it, the smiths here are pretty good, right. Those two are my twin sons, one is Tie Long, the other is Tie Hu. Although they're young, they're still following in my footsteps and are the best smiths in the shop."

Sure enough, Tang San was looking at these two, it was the Tie brothers he and Xiao Wu defeated last time in the Spirit Arena ring, that Iron Blood Combination. At that time, their All In One Throw ability even injured Tang San.

Hearing Tie Xin say this, Tang San immediately understood why Tie Xin would have spirit power fluctuations. Judging by the spirit power fluctuations, Tie Xin's strength wasn't very powerful, not equal to his two sons'. Clearly, Tie Long and Tie Hu's spirits had some degree of variation. At their age, already possessing more than twentieth ranked spirit power, even if it was at an advanced Spirit Master academy, they should still be considered good students.

"If we reach an agreement, then I'd like them to forge these things."

Tang San was a smith and a Spirit Master himself, naturally he clearly understood that forging with the support of spirit power was much better than common smiths' forging. Balancing the degree of strength as well as controlling strength, both were things ordinary people couldn't hope for.

Tie Xin looked closely at Tang San, smiling slightly, he said:

“If we truly reach an agreement, that’s no problem.”

He directly brought Tang San behind the work area to a room within the room with a desk and seven or eight chairs, as well as a simple wooden bed, it clearly was the office of this boss. Ordinarily it might also be used to rest. From the window the situation in the work area could be clearly seen.

Tie Xin without speaking immediately walked behind the desk and sat down, at the same time with a gesture inviting Tang San to sit. From his first impression of this youngster, Tie Xin was actually quite fond of Tang San’s style of down-to-earth manners, but if it was about business, he felt it was even more ridiculous. If it wasn’t for the one in ten thousand possibility, he wouldn’t have let Tang San follow him inside.

What business could a not seeming more than fifteen years old youngster provide him? Moreover he even spoke about iron essence.

“Young man, you said you also were a smith?”

Tie Xin asked.

Tang San smiled wryly inwardly, he somewhat understood Tie Xin’s attitude, after all he was too young, right now instead of talking business he was interrogating.

“Yes. I was a smith. My father was also a smith, I learned the trade from him.”

Hearing Tang San was a hereditary smith, Tie Xin couldn’t help but raise his impression somewhat,

“So it’s like that. By your accent, you shouldn’t be from around here. Did you move to Suotuo City with your family?”

Tang San shook his head,

“No. I came to attend school.”

“Attend school? Could it be you’re a Spirit Master?”

Tie Xin looked slightly expectantly at Tang San. Although there were all kinds of schools on the Continent, doubtless the Spirit Master academies were the most notable. Generally speaking, studying other things rarely meant moving, only Spirit Master academies were different. Only major cities had advanced Spirit Master academies.

In addition, Tie Xin saw that although Tang San's clothes and appearance were ordinary, his style of conversation clearly surpassed those of his age. Obviously he had seen some trading, which was why he asked this question. He naturally hoped Tang San was the student of some Spirit Master academy. Although by his age he only appeared to have just entered an intermediate Spirit Master Academy, a Spirit Master's status was after all different, all were recorded at Spirit Hall. Doing business with Spirit Masters, he only had to see the counterpart's Spirit Master rank and verify it with Spirit Hall, and he no longer had to worry that the counterpart would play any tricks.

Tang San nodded, saying:

"Yes, I just now enrolled in an academy. Do you still have any questions?"

Tie Xin spread the plans on the desk, once again carefully looking them over, then saying:

"From looking at the plans, the things you want are all extremely elaborate. Forging them isn't at all easy. Moreover, the fee isn't small. Although our Smithy has a certain scale, four hundred forty gold coins is still a very large sum to us. How do you intend to collaborate with us?"

Tang San had already properly thought through the method for collaboration on the way,

"Uncle Tie, like this will be fine. I will first pay an initial payment, and trouble you to make one set of these things. If there's no problem with the quality, we'll proceed with manufacturing at once. I will at first be able to pay about one hundred gold spirit coins or so."

Tie Xin frowned, saying:

“Young man, since you already are a smith, you should know that very many meticulous things require making molds. These molds are also the largest manufacturing cost. If it’s only making one, let alone me being unable to give you a discount, I’ll even lose money. Although one hundred gold spirit coins is sufficient for an initial payment, I hope you can add a guarantee. Since you are a Spirit Master, is it possible for you to let me take a look at your Spirit Master letter? As long as I confirm there is no problem, our collaboration can begin.”

Hearing Tang San would first pay a hundred gold spirit coins, Tie Xin already somewhat believed this youngster, however he had run this smithy for many years, and he couldn’t recognize these things Tang San wanted made, consequently, for dependability, he of course first wanted to get a feel for Tang San. As long as Tang San’s Spirit Master status was no problem, he would at once dare continue with this large deal.

As for the Spirit Master letter, that was provided the first time one received a stipend at Spirit Hall, it could be called a Spirit Master’s symbol of status, on it was recorded the Spirit Master’s information, and Spirit Hall’s special serial number. Just relying on this number, for a certain fee one could contact Spirit Hall and verify whether this Spirit Master was the same person.

Tang San didn’t hesitate, swiping his right hand over Twenty Four Moonlit Bridges, he took out his Spirit Master letter. It was nothing shameful to him, and he also hoped to be able to complete this arrangement, so naturally he first had to gain the other party’s trust.

The Spirit Master letter wasn’t paper or silk, but a palm sized disk of metal. Reportedly only Spirit Hall had this kind of metal, and it was very difficult to counterfeit. The metal selected for use with Spirit Master letters was also in order to prevent damage, after all, under ordinary circumstances this letter would follow the Spirit Master through his life.

On the palm sized metal object was engraved each time the Spirit Master advanced, altogether ten lines. On the first line was engraved the time and place of registration as well as the Spirit

Master's spirit. From the second line on were engraved the times of advancement as well as the spirit master levels. On the other side of the Spirit Master letter was carved Spirit Hall's first insignia, a long sword. This side of the letter was the same for all Spirit Masters, only people from Spirit Hall would have some variations.

Watching Tang San take out the Spirit Master letter and hand it over, Tie Xin hastily stood up and walked out from behind the desk, solemnly using both hands to receive it. The Spirit Master letter was a Spirit Master's symbol of status as well as advancement record, and ordinarily would not easily be shown. As important as the Spirit Master's dignity. Even though Tang San looked young, Tie Xin still didn't dare slight him.

Holding the ice cold metal disk, Tie Xin carefully looked at the surface, first to enter his eyes was the topmost line of small characters. These engraved characters were all specially created by Spirit Hall's, no matter which Spirit Hall, the font was always the same. On the top could be seen written:

'Name: Tang San, Gender, Male, Douluo Calendar Year 2637, registered at Nuoding City Spirit Sub-Hall, Spirit Blue Silver Grass.'

Reading this line, Tie Xin couldn't help but be somewhat disappointed. Although his own talent wasn't high, right now he was only twentieth something rank, part of Spirit Grandmasters forever unable to break through thirtieth rank. But he still had vision and naturally knew of Blue Silver Grass, this standard for useless spirits, could it be that even with a Blue Silver Grass Spirit it was possible to become a Spirit Master?

With doubt in his heart, Tie Xin turned his gaze to the second line of the Spirit Master letter.

'Tenth ranked Spirit Master, registration time, Douluo Calendar Year 2637. Registered at Nuoding City's Spirit Sub-Hall.'

Tie Xin rubbed his eyes, it wouldn't be a mistake, right, why still year 2637, was Blue Silver Grass Spirit truly able to cultivate to the Spirit Master realm? Wasn't this record wrong?

Tie Xin looked at Tang San with a doubtful gaze,

“Young man, isn’t there a mistake in the records on this Spirit Master letter, why is your registration for becoming Spirit Scholar and Spirit Master unexpectedly the same year?”

Tang San smiled slightly,

“No, it’s no mistake, since I had innate full spirit power.”

Innate full spirit power? Tie Xin was gobsmacked, his gaze at Tang San immediately changed, regardless of what his spirit was like, the words ‘innate full spirit power’ were sufficient to shock him. At least among the Spirit Masters Tie Xin knew, there still wasn’t anyone with innate full spirit power. ‘No wonder, no wonder he would become Spirit Master in the same year, how could I have expected, he even has these kinds of circumstances like innate full spirit power. An innate full spirit power Blue Silver Grass Spirit Master, this is still too surprising.’

Somewhat eagerly he looked at the Spirit Master letter’s third line, since he previously saw that the Spirit Master letter altogether had three lines.

‘Twentieth ranked Spirit Grandmaster, registration time, Douluo Calendar Year 2639. Registered at Nuoding City Spirit Sub-Hall.

On the Spirit Master letter wouldn’t be recorded spirit abilities and levels of spirit rings obtained at different levels, those were after all a Spirit Master’s secret. Even Spirit Hall’s own record would at most only have the spirit ring levels. As for spirit abilities, those would not be lightly revealed by Spirit Masters.

Part 3

2637, 2638, 2639. With only three years of time, he was already a Spirit Grandmaster? A Spirit Grandmaster over rank twenty? He didn’t look over fifteen, but it was year 2643, which meant he broke through rank two to four years ago.

This time, Tie Xin was thoroughly surprised. Ignoring the useless

blue silver grass spirit and just judging by spirit power, he definitely was a prodigy, so much more outstanding than his two sons.

“Uncle Tie, have you finished looking?” Tang San asked politely.

Iron Heart silently gave the Spirit Master letter back to Tang San. He had already memorized the serial number on it and could verify it at anytime.

“Spirit Grandmaster Tang San, I apologize for the offense earlier.” Tie Xin said solemnly.

Tang San smiled while shaking his head, “It’s nothing, it’s hard to do business. If it was me, I might be even more suspicious. After all, I am quite young.”

Tie Xin couldn’t help but ask, “Can you tell me how old you are?”

Tang San didn’t keep it a secret, “I’ll be thirteen in a few months.”

Tie Xin sucked in a cold breath. Not even thirteen, which meant he was only twelve, and it was four years ago, which meant he became a Spirit Grandmaster when he was only eight. Was this real? Was it possibly real?

“Spirit Grandmaster Tang San, I still have one last request. Can I see your spirit rings?”

A twelve year old Spirit Grandmaster, to Tie Xin, was an absolutely unbelievable thing. After all, there were only seven of Shrek’s monsters, and it wasn’t something normal people could understand.

When Tie Xin said this, even he felt it was a bit excessive, a bit too paranoid, his face slightly apprehensive.

Tang San however didn’t mind. He needed a long term cooperation with the smithy. Getting their trust was obviously very important. Tie Xin’s every action was steady, and combined with the size of this smithy, everything was very satisfying.

“Sure.” Tang San slowly raised his left hand, a blue glow quietly bubbled forward.

Tie Xin looked closely at Tang San, waiting for the spirit rings that follow the appearance of the spirit.

Maybe the Spirit Master Letter could be forged, but spirit rings couldn't be faked. That was the real proof of a Spirit Master's rank.

Lustrous purplish blue Blue Silver Grass milled out of Tang San's palm, instantly spreading out, hanging down onto the ground and quickly covering the entire room's floor. At the same time, three beautiful spirit rings appeared and levitated from his feet, two yellow and one purple. Three very distinct spirit rings revolved around his body rhythmically bobbing.

At this time, the air seemed as if it solidified, everything in the room became ethereal.

Tie Xin's mouth gaped open, eyes staring rigidly at the spirit rings on Tang San. His hands unconsciously shuddered.

"You. You....."

Tang San said:

"I just got my third spirit ring. I haven't had time to register it at Spirit Hall, so the Spirit Master Letter doesn't have the record of me becoming a Spirit Elder."

Three, was that really three? Tie Xin's heart was shaking. Twelve years old, Spirit Elder, over level thirty, blue silver grass. These words constantly circled around in Tie Xin's mind. His mind blanked, an indescribable feeling filled his chest.

From Tang San, Tie Xin felt a pressure, the pressure of a higher ranked Spirit Master.

"Are you really only twelve?"

Tie Xin asked difficulty.

At that moment, suddenly the door opened. A tall figure walked in from outside.

"Dad, I heard the people at the front say that there is a big

customer? Ah!? This is....”

The tall figure suddenly froze. Under the pressure of the blue silver grass, he immediately released his spirit, two yellow hundred year spirit rings rising from his feet.

“It’s you.”

It was Tie Long who came in. When he saw Tang San, he cried out in surprise. Especially after he saw the purple third spirit ring on Tang San, his expression changed abruptly.

Tie Xin after all had been through a lot. He already recovered from his shock.

“A Long^[5], you recognize Spirit Elder Tang San?”

Tie Long opened his eyes wide open, staring at Tang San’s third spirit ring. Slightly dejected, he said:

“Dad, you still remember the time my brother and I lost to two children in the Spirit Arena? It was Tang San and another girl’s group called the Three Five Combination. That time Tang San even stopped Xiao Wu from heavily injuring us. Tang San, you actually broke through rank thirty?”

Tang San retracted his spirit, the blue silver grass and the spirit rings disappearing at the same time. Smiling and nodding towards Tie Long, he said,

“Big brother Tie, greetings. Last time we were battling at the Spirit Arena, I was already rank twenty nine. A couple of days ago, I had a bit of fortune and broke through rank thirty.”

Tie Long laughed bitterly,

“Compared with you, my brother and I are simply useless. The people at the front said a big customer came. Is it you?”

Tang San chuckled and said

“How is it not me? This time I intentionally came to inconvenience you. Only I didn’t realize it was your family’s smithy.”

Tie Xin sighed in his mind. His gaze towards Tang San had changed entirely. Maybe he wasn't sure what a twelve year old Spirit Elder really meant, but even if he had no foresight he could see that Tang San's future was immeasurable.

"Spirit Elder Tang San, I apologize for the doubt I had. I have no problem with working together. Let's do it the way you said before."

Tang San secretly let a breath out. He finally agreed to the cooperation. This way, Tang San could have more time to cultivate and create stronger hidden weapons.

"Uncle Tie, I still want to buy a set of blacksmithing tools of the best quality. Please help me deliver it to the academy. I'll tell you the address later."

Tie Xin decisively said: "No problem, whatever you need in the future, just come to us for it. If it is within our ability, we'll give it to you. Don't worry, I will let Tie Long and Tie Hu take it over, so the quality won't be a problem. Those two kids were taught by me. Their skills are the best in the smithy."

Tang San said: "Then sorry for the inconvenience, Tie brothers."

After leaving the address of Shrek Academy and paying one hundred gold spirit coins, Tang San, under the escort of the Tie family, left the smithy.

"Uncle Tie, Tie Brothers, you don't have to see me off anymore. I'll put my purchases in your care. After you finish forging them, let someone notify me and I will come retrieve it. Sorry for the inconvenience, but try to send the blacksmithing tools to me as soon as possible, as well as the minerals I specified."

"Don't worry. I'll tell someone to send those things to you tomorrow. By the way, Spirit Elder Tang San, does your school still accept students? If my two useless sons can go to your academy, I think their abilities will grow very quickly." Tie Xin saw with his own eyes Tang San's abilities. An academy that can educate spirit masters like Tang San was definitely something enticing.

Tang San said: "I'm afraid not, my academy has high standards and

only admits people under twelve. The Tie Brothers are already too old.”

Tie Long said: “It’s fine dad. Being at Suotuo Advanced Spirit Master Academy also works. We will try hard to get to rank thirty as soon as possible.”

When they came Ma Hongjun already told Tang San to not wait for him. After Tang San left the smithy, he didn’t linger in Suo Tuo City and immediately went back to the academy. To him, the rest of the day will be past through cultivating. Tang San never thought he was a prodigy. He only brought the Mysterious Heaven Treasure Record to this world. The innate full spirit power and the fast cultivation was all due to the Mysterious Heaven Treasure Record. So, he must not slack off.

The next morning, Tang San habitually climbed to the rooftop to cultivate his Purple Demon Eyes, breathing in the purple air from the east brought by the morning sun.

The sky was clear. Looking at the gradually rising orange sphere and the golden sky far away, Tang San slowly breathed out impure qi, his eyes full of purple. The three essences of his spirit almost simultaneously reached their peaks. he knows, he improved again. Coming back from Star Dou Great Forest up to now, he finally recovered all his power.

Although everyday he had to wake up early to cultivate, he didn’t actually cultivate for long. The purple air from the east only maintained for a very short period.

It was time to eat. Tang San flipped down from the roof, going straight to the dining hall.

Without even going inside, Tang San smelled an overwhelming smell, a thick fragrance of meat with a few other smells wafted over, alluring Tang San.

Going into the dining hall, Tang San was immediately shocked by the sight. He was definitely the earliest of the students, but there was already a busy figure.

He continuously watched the pot, controlling the fire and busily managing all kinds of food, wearing a white chef's hat. Sweat dripped down the stiff face. It was Grandmaster. Unexpectedly, he was making everyone breakfast.

"Teacher." Tang San stepped into the cafeteria.

Grandmaster looked up and when he saw Tang San, he smiled. "You are never late."

Tang San quickly walked to the side, washed his hands, and returned to Grandmaster's side. "I'll help you." He knew, whenever Grandmaster did things, he did it to the end. There wasn't room for giving up halfway, so he didn't ask Grandmaster why he wanted to make breakfast for everyone, nor did he try to stop Grandmaster.

Grandmaster shook his head, "No need, I already finished everything. Come, try my workmanship."

Notes

1. The Chinese characters are (tie jiang pu 铁匠铺) which translates literally to "Iron Craftsman Shop". The chapter title is then "'Iron' Craftsman Shop".
2. (tie 铁)
3. (Tie jing 铁精) Doesn't seem to have a real world counterpart. Google will suggest it's forge ash, which is supposed to have medical implementations, or hematite powder.
4. (铁心) "Iron Heart". So the English equivalent of this would be for a smith named Smith to run a smithy called Smith's.
5. (阿龙) He uses an "ah" prefix particle that implies familiarity.

040 – Special Training First Stage Start

Part 1

Grandmaster picked up a big bowl, ladling up two big scoops from the pot constantly emitting meat fragrance and handing it to Tang San, from the side picking up two steamed buns and two eggs and setting them on a tray before Tang San.

“Eat, you children are all in a growth period, you certainly need abundant nutrition. The body is the foundation of cultivation, without a good body, how could you support tremendous spirit power? Yesterday I carefully reflected on the encounters you had in Star Dou Great Forest this time, most of all absorbing the Man Faced Demon Spider surpassing your rank. You being able to succeed is admittedly related to your firm willpower, but your sturdy body also had a significant effect. Very many Spirit Masters only focus on cultivating their spirit power and technique, but neglect to fundamentally train their body. Perhaps in the short term nothing can be seen, but after a long time like this, it will inevitably have a restraining effect on advancing to the higher levels.”

Taking the breakfast Grandmaster handed over, Tang San didn't purport to fast, the rich meat broth clearly had been boiling for a very long time already, little chunks of sliced meat had already been thoroughly stewed, the contents also had a faint medicinal fragrance. From just one whiff, Tang San felt his stomach make a rumbling sound.

Grandmaster's cooking was better than imagined, the meat broth smelled delicious, the well cooked meat practically melting in the mouth, along with the two steamed buns and two eggs, ever since coming to Shrek Academy, this was the first time Tang San ate breakfast until he was so full. A warm feeling continuously spread from his belly through his whole body, indescribably comfortable.

Tang San had just finished eating when Xiao Wu's voice sounded from outside,

"Such a good smell, it seems that today we have something tasty."

Two people walked into the dining hall. Apart from Xiao Wu there was also her roommate Ning Rongrong. Other people might not know Grandmaster's character, but how could Xiao Wu be ignorant. Tang San was Grandmaster's disciple, after being influenced for all these years, she could also be considered having some understanding of Grandmaster.

"Grandmaster, hello."

Xiao Wu respectfully greeted Grandmaster.

Grandmaster nodded to her, but lacked the smile he had for Tang San. To be precise, apart from Tang San, there were very few people who were able to see Grandmaster's smiling expression.

Ning Rongrong's nose twitched. She had been forcefully dragged here by Xiao Wu and was right now still hazy from sleep, but that rich meat fragrance made her gradually wake up.

Grandmaster gave them each a bowl of meat broth, a steamed bun and an egg, half of what he gave Tang San, the girls after all required somewhat less food.

"Eat quickly, no time to also talk."

Xiao Wu and Ning Rongrong's hunger was awoken by the meat broth's aroma, immediately digging in, eating their breakfast.

Seeing Xiao Wu bring Ning Rongrong, Tang San immediately started. Yes, he also should have called Oscar here. He understood Grandmaster even better than Xiao Wu, and naturally knew Teacher's temper wasn't as calm as on the surface, the uncompromising nature towards others was like his name, extremely firm^[1].

Thinking of this, Tang San hastily took his leave of Grandmaster. He didn't only have to wake Oscar, he also had to deal with the others.

Under Tang San's efforts, everyone ate breakfast. If they in the beginning called Tang San some resentful words at being woken up, after eating the sumptuous breakfast, they unendingly praised Grandmaster.

After an hour, the bell sounded start of class, time for assembly.

The sunlight brought a fresh and exuberant vitality, all living things thriving in the sunlight, the new day had begun.

Grandmaster with both hands behind his back stood in the center of the grounds, looking at the seven students arranged before him by age. Today's class only had one teacher. Flender had said, from now on the Academy's teachers would all comply with Grandmaster's education.

Grandmaster's cool gaze swept across everyone,

"For tomorrow's breakfast, I hope to see you all show up even earlier at the dining hall. Eating food requires a period for digestion afterwards, one can't immediately conduct strict exercise. I will prepare a good breakfast at dawn, if you haven't come to eat in one hour, you needn't eat at all."

Grandmaster's sharp gaze swept over all the students. He naturally saw some had not listened, but he still didn't repeat himself.

"I have already understood each of your spirits and capabilities. Starting from today, I will start your strengthening training. Dai Mubai, step forward."

Dai Mubai took one step forward, light pulsing in his evil eyes. He might not be too restrained in private, but when in class he absolutely was a good student. To him a teacher's words were law.

Grandmaster looked at the tall Dai Mubai, saying.

"I will give you one task. Starting from now, without causing any injuries, you will knock down those six one by one."

"Ah?"

Dai Mubai was startled, looking shocked at Grandmaster.

The expression on Grandmaster's face was rigid,

"You have thirty seventh rank spirit power. They are at most thirty first rank. Is there a problem?"

Dai Mubai turned his head to look at everyone, his gaze first falling on Tang San. The others didn't concern him, but he couldn't be fearless towards that virtuoso of hidden weapons Tang San.

"Tang San step forward."

Grandmaster's voice echoed once again.

Tang San immediately stepped forward, standing at Dai Mubai's side.

Grandmaster looked at Tang San, saying:

"You can't use your third spirit ability or those peculiar weapons. You can begin."

"Wait a moment."

The speaker was Dai Mubai,

"Grandmaster, this isn't fair, if Tang San can't display his full strength, then, what is the meaning to us fighting? His rank is lower than mine, if his spirit abilities are also restricted, then this makes my advantage too big. Although Tang San's third spirit ring was a powerful Man Faced Demon Spider, I have confidence in myself."

Grandmaster calmly said:

"If he uses his third spirit ring, you won't have any chance. A control system Spirit Master, unless encountering countering spirits, are the most powerful in a duel. Since you asked for it, let Tang San use his third spirit ring. As comrades, you also have to understand each other.

The others all subconsciously retreated. Grandmaster was also no exception. Over thirtieth ranked Spirit Elders' strength was already powerful, and without flawless control they might very easily injure bystanders.

Dai Mubai's evil eyes gradually reddened, although compared to him his opponent was a full six ranks lower, he didn't dare be the least bit careless. Shrek Academy's students were all intense, but the only monster who could make him afraid was Tang San.

"Little San, take care. I will not be lenient."

Tang San only nodded, without saying anything. He could clearly sense the muscles over Dai Mubai's body already going completely taut, his appearance like a coiled spring or mountain tiger.

Pale white light abruptly burst from Dai Mubai's body, both arms simultaneously stretching to either side, chest sticking out, the bones all over the body making cracking sounds. Muscles swelling in a flash, filling up the clothes of his body, the atmosphere around him already seeming to become wild and impatient.

Dai Mubai's spirit White Tiger completed its Body Enhancement.

Blue light rushed out from Tang San's body. Somewhat transformed by the Man Faced Demon Spider's spirit ring, already a bit more slender Blue Silver Grass quietly spread out from under Tang San's feet.

Slowly raising his right hand towards the tightly wound Dai Mubai, Tang San seriously said:

"Mubai, if you can break my third spirit ability, then consider it your win."

Dai Mubai's mind was shaken. Not just he, but even the other students observing the fight also watched Tang San attentively. They all wanted to see, after experiencing such violent pain, just how formidable Tang San's third spirit ability actually was.

The double pupils in Dai Mubai's evil eyes momentarily merged. Without even thinking about it, the third spirit ring over his body, that sparkling purple released in a flash. The third spirit ability White Tiger Vajra Transformation activated.

The body already made powerful by Spirit White Tiger Body Enhancement once again swelled, his muscles swelling

exaggeratedly, his clothes completely bursting, exposing a terrifying muscle outline. On his skin appeared black striation, a pair of tiger paws again enlarging, the sharp blades ejected on top all became bright silver, his whole body enveloped in a layer of golden light, like he was gilded. Blood red eyes expressing a bloodthirsty light, his whole body giving off a kind of king of beasts tyranny.

Originally when Dai Mubai first fought Tang San, it was by relying on White Tiger Vajra Transformation that he could instantly break Tang San's second spirit ring ability. Right now once again confronting Tang San, he also used his strongest spirit ability. His goal was to rely on his sharp tiger claws to cut open Tang San's Blue Silver Grass.

"Take care."

The Blue Silver Grass under Tang San's feet moved in a flash, countless vines milling out. Some rising into the air, some sliding along the ground, some arcing around the sides, rushing towards Dai Mubai from all directions.

Dai Mubai was classified as a strong power type Spirit Master, agility wasn't what he was good at, and watching the Blue Silver Grass twisting towards him, he didn't dodge. Abruptly the golden light over his body became even a bit stronger, meeting the Blue Silver Grass with an assault.

Dai Mubai only took three steps before his powerful body at once stopped moving. Blue Silver Grass first spirit ability, Binding, launched, firmly binding his body within.

Dai Mubai at once subconsciously wanted to rely on his physical strength to struggle free, just like last time. But, in the split second he generated strength he discovered something amiss.

Part 2

Infused with the third spirit ring's properties, although Blue Silver Grass became thinner, the degree of its toughness multiplied geometrically. Under Dai Mubai's full exertion, unexpectedly he

couldn't tear open the Blue Silver Grass, instead that more slender Blue Silver Grass dug tightly into his muscles.

The Ghost Vine thorns quietly protruded, and if not for Dai Mubai's skin becoming incomparably hard from White Tiger Vajra Transformation, he would already be suffering from the mix of Ghost Vine and Man Faced Demon Spider poison.

But, the thirty seventh ranked Dai Mubai wasn't so easy to handle. Seeing he was unable to throw off the Blue Silver Grass with brute strength, he immediately moved his trapped hands.

The tiger claw blades abruptly ejected, fiercely sawing at the Blue Silver Grass. In a moment, those blades were already gradually cutting into the Blue Silver Grass. When Dai Mubai used his spirit power at full strength, Blue Silver Grass with the amplifications still couldn't hold him down.

However, Tang San didn't hope to rely on this Blue Silver Grass being able to directly restrain Dai Mubai, he was after all a thirty seventh ranked Spirit Elder. His goal was just to have Blue Silver Grass temporarily restrain Dai Mubai for a short time, letting him unleash his third spirit ability, that's all. The profound meaning of a control system Spirit Master, was to control his opponent from the very start of the battle until its end.

When Dai Mubai's sharp blades began to cut the Blue Silver Grass, a sphere of blue green light already launched. Dai Mubai naturally also saw that sphere, and although his body was tied up, he still wasn't unable to move.

He knew that the sphere of light fired from Tang San's hand should be his third spirit ring. At the moment unable to change shape, he leaned sideways, falling to the ground.

What he needed right now was time. As long as he had enough time to struggle free of Blue Silver Grass, and in addition relying on thirty seventh ranked spirit power plus the increase in physical strength and attack power from White Tiger Vajra Transformation, he had faith he could break Tang San's third spirit ring.

Before everyone's amazed gazes, the blue green sphere of light rapidly unfurled, a five meter wide net dropping from the sky. Although Dai Mubai rolled over, he still couldn't escape its reach, the speed with which it spread was too fast. Furthermore, that blue green sphere of light was launched with Tang San's Arrow Hand Throw^[2] technique, its speed reaching a terrifying level.

Weng, the huge spider net abruptly wrapped around him. Dai Mubai only felt his whole body tighten, his entire body was already tightly restrained within that spider web.

The tiger claws cut into Blue Silver Grass, but as Dai Mubai prepared to continue cutting, from those spider web threads seemingly slimmer than the Blue Silver Grass, suddenly transmitted an intensely paralysing and burning sensation, even with the power of the White Tiger Vajra Transformation, he was still unable to disperse the numbing feeling.

Strong stickiness bound up Dai Mubai's body like a dumpling. As the spider web continuously tightened, the sharp edges of the tiger claws came into contact with the spider web, unexpectedly they directly bounced off, without leaving even a mark.

Dai Mubai unleashed the full strength of his spirit power, hoping to be able to break free of the paralysis and spider web. But the more strength he used, the tighter the spider web twisted around him, that kind of feeling of power being useless immediately made this Evil Eye White Tiger sink into despondency.

The paralysing feeling grew stronger and stronger, and the resisting spirit power naturally also grew weaker. As the spider web twinkling with blue green light continuously tightened, the bones in Dai Mubai's body began to make creaking sounds.

"Enough."

Grandmaster calmly declared.

Tang San hurried forward with big strides, lifting his hand to wipe at the spider net. Strangely, that sticky spider web once again became light, quietly merging into Tang San's hand and disappearing, even

that Blue Silver Grass twisting around Dai Mubai became streams of light and disappeared.

“This is my third spirit ability, Spider Web Restraint.”

Tang San helped Dai Mubai up, while explaining to him. At the same time he absorbed the poison from Dai Mubai into his own body.

Grandmaster walked over to the two, seeing Dai Mubai’s gloomy face, he calmly said:

“Control. It’s a control system Spirit Master’s characteristic capability. Generally speaking, a control system spirit master’s attack is rather weak, but their controlling strength is exceptionally powerful. Below sixtieth rank, an outstanding control system Spirit Master is able to completely restrain an opponent within a gap of ten ranks. Aside from being able to restrain control system Spirit Masters’ spirits, when confronting a control system Spirit Master the best method is to not give them the opportunity to exercise their control. But as a power attack type Spirit Master, a control system Spirit Master is precisely your nemesis. Under these kinds of circumstances, you should pull open the distance to the control system Spirit Master.”

Gaze sweeping towards the others, Grandmaster continued:

“Every spirit master has their own strengths and weaknesses. In this world there are no perfect Spirit Masters. But.....”

Saying this, Grandmaster paused a moment,

“But, there are perfect teams. One person alone is unable to reach absolute strength, but one team with instinctive coordination can reach perfection. Mutually relying on each other is sufficient to confront enemies of any properties. The control power of Tang San’s third ability is great, but it also has extremely distinct weak points. As far as possible separating from his attack range, no matter how strong the spider web is it can’t restrain you. You are one entity. When you confront the enemy together, your first priority is to complement each other’s weak points. If everyone’s advantages can be fully displayed, then, you will become an unequalled existence

among those equally ranked. Dai Mubai, continue your present course. Next, you will meet the enemy head on, divided into Zhu Zhuqing with Ning Rongrong's combination as well as Oscar and Ma Hongjun's combination."

Dai Mubai had now already withdrawn his White Tiger Vajra Transformation. Light pulsing in his evil eyes, this time he only nodded, without saying anything.

Grandmaster's gaze turned to Tang San,

"Since you used your third spirit ability on Dai Mubai, then, you can take his place against one opponent. Xiao Wu, let me see your third spirit ability."

Xiao Wu giggled, walking towards Tang San,

"Little San, you'll have to be careful, eh."

The two fights began practically simultaneously. Tang San confronted Xiao Wu, Dai Mubai confronted Ma Hongjun and Oscar.

Seeing Dai Mubai in a bad mood, Ma Hongjun couldn't help but feel somewhat weak,

"Boss Dai, you wouldn't release the Evil Fire on me, right?"

Dai Mubai snapped:

"You're the only one with Evil Fire. Less nonsense, come."

Speaking, he charged at Ma Hongjun.

Ma Hongjun didn't dare be neglectful, while swiftly completing his Spirit Body Enhancement, he simultaneously took the two sausages Oscar held out and quickly retreated.

Facing the aggressive Dai Mubai, Ma Hongjun didn't dare let him in close, immediately launching his second spirit ring ability, Bathing Fire Phoenix.

Intense purple flames abruptly leapt up, blazing heat spreading in the air in a flash, the intensity of the flames clearly somewhat stronger than in Star Dou Great Forest.

After meeting one danger after another in Star Dou Great Forest, not only Tang San and Xiao Wu had advanced in strength, everyone had improved somewhat under the pressure. Shrek students were originally prodigies, in a crisis, their potential naturally appeared under even greater stress.

Feeling the blazing Phoenix flames over Ma Hongjun, Dai Mubai didn't have the slightest intention of withdrawing, rushing to meet Ma Hongjun, although the raging flames over Fatty would injure him, they still couldn't cause any serious degree of harm. But if Fatty let him attack in close range, then, he would definitely die tragically.

If it was in the past, Ma Hongjun seeing Dai Mubai in close range would definitely lose his head out of fear. Although his spirit power wasn't low, his combat experience was far from equal to Dai Mubai or Tang San's abundance, he was always relying on his powerful flames.

But right now confronting Dai Mubai's charge, Ma Hongjun not only didn't panic, his face instead revealed a mischievous smile.

Dai Mubai naturally wouldn't give up on his attack just because of the opponent's expression, in the moment when he was about to hit Ma Hongjun, Ma Hongjun's first spirit ring suddenly shone. A Phoenix Fire Wire as thick as an arm shot out.

Going through the battles in Star Dou Great Forest, Ma Hongjun discovered that when using Phoenix Fire Wire while in Bathing Fire Phoenix, its power doubled. Although the spirit power consumption also grew, the result was extremely good.

It could even compare to the third spirit abilities of some Spirit Masters, this was the benefit of a naturally powerful spirit.

Dai Mubai snorted coldly, he seemed to have long ago already anticipated that Ma Hongjun would have this move, his first and second spirit rings flared simultaneously, White Tiger Body Barrier and White Tiger Light Wave activated simultaneously.

Part 3

Intense white light and purple fire clashed together fiercely in midair, despite the formidable power amplification of Phoenix Fire Wire under Bathing Fire Phoenix, Ma Hongjun's spirit power gap to Dai Mubai was ten ranks, and it was still he who lost out.

With a snort, he hurriedly retreated.

Dai Mubai had plentiful battle experience, sharp claws ejecting from his tiger paws, just like a fierce white tiger, he pounced in a flash.

"Boss Dai, I'm not fighting alone."

Ma Hongjun wasn't at all flustered, the moment Dai Mubai was about to pounce at him, suddenly, Ma Hongjun's body abruptly flew back with astonishing speed, in an eyeblink he was already ten meters away.

Dai Mubai rushed at thin air, and immediately came to a distracted stop, although Ma Hongjun's spirit possessed the ability to fly, his current spirit power was still far from sufficient to let him fly with his spirit. Recalling what Ma Hongjun said, Dai Mubai immediately understood.

It was Oscar's mushroom sausage.

Relying on the mushroom sausage, Ma Hongjun could fly for one minute, at the speed of the Phoenix Tail Crest Serpent, Dai Mubai reached the conclusion that he was unable to catch up.

'One minute, you only have one minute, that's all.' Dai Mubai sneered inwardly, turning to avoid the Phoenix Fire Wire Ma Hongjun shot into the air, just like a tiger pouncing at prey attacking Oscar not far away.

First dealing with this support, then in one minute the fight would end.

Unfortunately, his arbitrary scheme fell to nothing. Oscar had long ago prepared, seeing Dai Mubai's target change to him, without waiting for him to come close, already swallowed a mushroom sausage and soared up.

Although Dai Mubai's White Tiger Light Wave was able to attack at a distance, it was only within twenty meters, if he wanted to extend the distance, he had to consume a great amount of spirit power. In his previous fight with Tang San, using White Tiger Vajra Transformation, his spirit power consumption was considerable, and right now he naturally didn't dare consume too much.

Watching Oscar and Ma Hongjun in midair each eat a recovery sausage, Oscar rapidly making his vulgar spirit next to Ma Hongjun, and Ma Hongjun continuously fired his Phoenix Fire Wire from the air. With the support of recovery sausages, his spirit power consumption obtained a certain replenishment, and for a brief time he didn't need to worry about exhausting himself.

Under the amplification of Bathing Fire Phoenix, Ma Hongjun's Phoenix Fire Wire was extremely powerful, where the purple flames scorched the ground they left behind long grooves. What made Dai Mubai even angrier was Ma Hongjun constantly sweeping flames from in midair, never very good at dodging, in a moment he was battered and exhausted. Only thanks to his first spirit ring ability White Tiger Body Barrier was he able to repeatedly block Fatty's flames. Out of reach, and unable to dodge, he could only waste White Tiger Light Wave on Fatty.

But, while they he ate recovery sausages, he had just now consumed a lot of spirit power, it didn't take long to disappear, and when Fatty ate a second mushroom sausage to maintain flight, Dai Mubai's spirit power was already unable to keep up.

If he confronted Fatty in peak condition, Dai Mubai still could have relied on his profound spirit power to wear down the opponents. After all Oscar's recovery sausage could only recover a little spirit power at once. By making mushroom sausages Oscar consumption was considerable, persisting long enough, these two fellows would naturally have to land.

But right now Dai Mubai had previously used White Tiger Vajra Transformation, in addition Oscar had reached the thirtieth rank, making recovery sausages was practically instantaneous, constantly throwing them to Ma Hongjun as if he didn't have to use up spirit

power. With the support of large quantities of recovery sausages, Fatty's battle endurance clearly could hold out for a long time.

As Ma Hongjun ate his third mushroom sausage, Dai Mubai's White Tiger Light Wave was already somewhat unable to block the Phoenix Fire Wire, his spirit power already insufficient to support the consumption.

But at the same time, on the other side Tang San and Xiao Wu were also happily fighting.

When Dai Mubai was attacking Ma Hongjun on their side, on the other side Tang San and Xiao Wu were already in battle.

Tang San didn't know how many times he had fought Xiao Wu, Blue Silver Grass in the first moment densely covered the area around him, as long as Xiao Wu entered this area, he would immediately launch the Binding ability.

Tang San was extremely familiar with Xiao Wu, how would he not also be as familiar to Xiao Wu? Although after Tang San obtained the third spirit ring, Blue Silver Grass changed significantly, from the previous fight between him and Dai Mubai, Xiao Wu from careful observation had roughly grasped the degree of change in Tang San's spirit.

"Little San, do you have to be so on your guard?"

Xiao Wu's voice held a note of complaint, sounding somewhat wronged.

Tang San subconsciously raised his head to look at her, even though as he raised his head he already became aware of the mistake, it was still a little too late. He saw Xiao Wu's already turned pink pair of eyes.

Xiao Wu's second spirit ability, Demon Confusion^[3], activated.

Tang San felt a burst of giddiness in his brain, fortunately he had in the first moments closed his eyes, not letting Xiao Wu's ability display its full might. But after reaching the thirtieth rank, Xiao Wu's spirit ability still had been strengthened a certain degree. This

moment made Tang San's mind briefly blank out.

Tang San secretly cursed his stupidity, ever since coming to Shrek Academy, he hadn't sparred with Xiao Wu at all, and he had relaxed somewhat. If he had first used Purple Demon Eye he wouldn't be in his current predicament. Purple Demon Eye could be Xiao Wu's Demon Confusion spirit ability's natural enemy.

Even Xiao Wu herself didn't expect her surprise attack to succeed, but seeing Tang San close his eyes, the Blue Silver Grass losing its luster, she naturally wouldn't let this opportunity slip by. One foot pointing to the ground, she noiselessly leapt towards Tang San.

By a strict interpretation, Xiao Wu should also be considered an agility attack system Spirit Master. Only the difference between her and Zhu Zhuqing was that her attack method required her to stick close to fully work, while Zhu Zhuqing used hit and run, an assassin's way.

Though his mind was briefly blank, subconsciously everyone would protect themselves, Tang San without the slightest hesitation raised his right hand, blue green light once again launching.

The light unfurled in a flash, the five meter in diameter spider web was in a moment able to render the enemy's attack direction completely impassable in front of Tang San. Xiao Wu's attack was no exception.

Right now it would appear Xiao Wu was already completely without moves, basically without a chance of changing direction, in a moment about to crash into Tang San's Spider Web Restraint. This was the spider web even Dai Mubai was unable to throw off, with her spirit power, when bound, she could only fall paralysed to the ground, losing the ability to fight.

But Xiao Wu like Ma Hongjun assisted by the mushroom sausage, when confronted with Tang San's Spider Web Restraint, was without any panic. Just like what Grandmaster had said, any spirit ability could be restrained.

Just in front of the spider web, the third spirit ability over Xiao Wu

flared, her third spirit ability emerging before everyone for the first time.

The third spirit ring over Xiao Wu's body abruptly blossomed with purple light, but differently from the others, the purple light unexpectedly wrapped around her body in a split second, in the next moment, Xiao Wu disappeared in midair.

But by now Tang San had just thrown off the effect of Xiao Wu's Demon Confusion ability, relying on Purple Demon Eye's cultivation and firm willpower, in addition to Mysterious Heaven Skill's orthodox school ability to restrain this Demon Confusion ability, he was only sluggish for a moment, that's all. As he recovered to normal, it was just in time to see the scene of Xiao Wu's body wrapped up in purple light and disappear.

Xiao Wu gone, Tang San's spider web immediately hit only air. Once the purple light again appeared, it was already behind the spider web, or to be precise, it was right in front of Tang San, Xiao Wu's pair of slender calves already simultaneously connecting with Tang San's shoulders, at the same time her charming laughter reached him,

"Little San, you've lost."

In their past contests, once Xiao Wu got close, as long as Tang San didn't use hidden weapons there was nothing he could do.

After advancing past thirtieth rank, Xiao Wu's spirit power had clearly improved, although separated by trousers, Tang San could still feel the astonishing flexibility of her calves. Wedged between the calves, already twisting around Tang San's neck, the first spirit ability Waist Bow activated in a flash, about to directly bring Tang San's body to the ground.

One must know, along with spirit power increasing, right now Xiao Wu's Waist Bow was already able to amplify her waist strength over one hundred twenty percent, that was in no way on a level any Spirit Master could resist using physical strength.

Seeing Xiao Wu's bent back delicate body transmit strength towards

his neck, Tang San in his startlement didn't neglect to shout,

"Maybe not."

Blue green light launched once again, this time, it was released at Tang San's own body.

Spider Web Restraint launched in just an eyeblink, the enormously adhesive spider web twisted Tang San and Xiao Wu's bodies tightly together, and although Xiao Wu's Waist Bow activated successfully, with the two bound together she was naturally unable to throw Tang San, with a putong sound, they simultaneously fell down on the ground.

To Tang San it was also the first time experiencing the terror of Spider Web Restraint. Following Blue Silver Grass forming the spider web it clung tightly to the two in a flash, pressing their bodies closely together.

Right now, Xiao Wu's calves were pressing tightly against Tang San's neck, with her back upward. Twisted like this, her butt stuck to Tang San's lower body, perfectly round and warm, adding to the pair's bodies touching everywhere as they fell and pressed together, Tang San lying face down on Xiao Wu immediately felt his body heat up.

Xiao Wu was already unable to again use her third spirit ability. The poison on the spider web was naturally ineffective on Tang San, but the effect on her was still extremely good, in a moment paralysis and a burning feeling spread all over her body, suppressing her ability to gather spirit power to once again use the third spirit ability. But this moment was also when Dai Mubai's spirit power was largely exhausted, making him unable to keep fighting.

"Good, you can all stop."

Grandmaster's timely voice resounded. Also at this moment, Oscar already dropped out of the air.

Only now did Dai Mubai recall that when Oscar ate his own sausage, the effect was weakened. Unfortunately, his spirit power was already far from sufficient, otherwise he would right now have

the opportunity to make a comeback.

Withdrawing the spider web, Tang San helped Xiao Wu stand up, both their expressions somewhat embarrassed. Xiao Wu's delicate little face blushed like a ripe apple, Tang San's distinct smell dying her body without fading for a long time. Lowering her head, the braid on the back of her head hung over her chest, not daring to look up at her nominal big brother.

Grandmaster did not seem to see Tang San and Xiao Wu's embarrassment, letting Ma Hongjun drop out of the air, sweeping his eyes over the five combatants.

"Tell me your thoughts."

Dai Mubai's mood was right now extremely depressed. Even if he had lost to Tang San's third spirit ability, Tang San was after all a control system Spirit Master. But this Fatty Ma Hongjun had never been his match. Unexpectedly being defeated this time, immediately he was unable to accept it:

"If my spirit power had been in peak condition, they wouldn't have had a chance."

Notes

1. His name is Gang, which translates as firm.
2. (甩手箭) Last described in chapter 9 against the Datura Snake.
3. (魅惑) Multiple ways to read this one, either literally as "Demon/Magic Confuse" or more figuratively as "Charm" or "Tempt".

041 – Not Abandoning, Not Giving Up

Part 1

Grandmaster glanced at him indifferently,

“Will you only try to kill your enemy when your spirit power is at its most powerful?”

Dai Mubai started, Grandmaster’s simple sentence left him speechless.

Grandmaster continued:

“You clearly know Oscar can supply mushroom sausages, so why would you give Ma Hongjun the opportunity to eat them? If you blocked him from the start, or as much as possible saved your spirit power, this win should have been yours.”

Ma Hongjun reached for Oscar’s shoulder,

“A pleasure, truly a pleasure, I didn’t expect one day we too would win against Dai Mubai. How exceptionally pleasant. Little Ao, this sausage of yours is truly useful.”

Oscar smiled mischievously,

“It’s only natural, how about we call ourselves Spirit Elders too.”

Grandmaster looked coldly at the pair,

“Are you proud of yourselves? Ma Hongjun, I ask you, when Oscar’s flying mushroom sausage failed, why did you let him fall to the ground? If at this time Dai Mubai still had the strength for one attack, killing him, what would you have done?”

“I.....”

Ma Hongjun looked dumbstruck at Grandmaster.

Grandmaster turned to Oscar,

“And you. For a food system Spirit Master, most important in any situation is to as far as possible preserve their life. He didn’t take the initiative to help you, so why didn’t you grab him to continue floating in the air? If it was a situation where Dai Mubai had sufficient spirit power, the moment you fell you would have been dispatched. If it was the enemy, right now you would already be dead. Spirit Elder? Even if it was a Title Douluo level food system Spirit Master, before a Battle Spirit Master he’s still extremely frail.”

Dai Mubai, Oscar and Ma Hongjun looked at each other, all of them speechless.

Grandmaster’s voice was flat and cool, drawing blood with each prick as he pointed out their mistakes.

“Little San.”

Grandmaster turned to Tang San.

Tang San hastily stepped forward,

“Teacher, I’m here.”

“Tell me your impressions of the fight with Xiao Wu.”

Tang San’s face reddened,

“Teacher, I messed up. I shouldn’t have been careless, getting caught in Xiao Wu’s second spirit ability Demon Confusion, to the extent that I sunk into a passive condition. Under conditions where I didn’t know her third spirit ability rashly releasing the spider web, making me sink even deeper into a passive condition.”

Grandmaster nodded,

“Knowing your mistakes is good. Your error was the most severe. A lion fighting a rabbit still needs all its strength, you unexpectedly violating this from the start is an unforgivable sin. If the enemy’s attack was a bit more severe, you would have died. Remember, a

control system Spirit Master not only has to control the enemy, they also have to control themselves.”

Finally, Grandmaster looked at Xiao Wu,

“Your third spirit ability should be teleportation^[1]. Only with a distance restriction. If my guess is correct, this should be the capability of the Lightning Rabbit^[2]. Your third spirit ring is a thousand year Lightning Rabbit. This kind of teleportation spirit ability, among all spirit abilities, belongs to the very rarest, you’ve given be a very pleasant surprise. At the same time, teleportation suits your Soft Skill, your killing power has substantially increased. But, why did you conclude it was already your victory once you wrapped around Tang San’s neck? If at that time you were a bit careful, when you saw Tang San use Spider Web Restraint for the third time, not anxious for quick results, first teleported away from his attack range and launched again, then you would already have won, and not been restrained.”

Xiao Wu quietly stuck out her tongue, but didn’t dare utter a word.

The look on Grandmaster’s stiff face was very unsightly,

“This is what is called monstrous genius? Your display today left me very disappointed. Each of your errors are unforgivable. Now, you must all suffer the punishment. Running. Supervise each other, you may not use spirit power. From the Academy run to Suotuo City and back, before lunch, I would like you to finish the round trip ten times. When you’re done is when you may eat. Tang San, your mistake was the most serious, therefore you run twelve times. Move at once, begin.”

Tang San was first to run out. Grandmasters word to him was no different than law.

Xiao Wu, Dai Mubai, Oscar and Ma Hongjun followed behind. Grandmaster even punished his direct disciple, and furthermore punished him the most seriously, what could they still say? Let alone that the errors Grandmaster pointed out to them were all grave mistakes.

“At the Academy’s entrance rocks are prepared. You will each carry

one on your back as you run. You must remember, you are one team, if there is one person who hasn't completed the punishment, then, no one can eat."

Grandmaster emphasized his words.

Although they couldn't use spirit power, they were all Spirit Masters. Spirit power transformed the body over many years, making them much stronger than ordinary people. Simply running, that couldn't reach Grandmaster's purpose.

The distance from the Academy to Suotuo City couldn't be considered too far, but a roughly three to four kilometres distance, making the round trip ten times, that would be roughly sixty to seventy kilometres. Adding in the carried weight, this was in no way an easy task.

Seeing the five figures run away, Ning Rongrong couldn't help but cackle, however, her laughter didn't last for long.

"Why aren't you running?"

Grandmaster's cold voice echoed.

"Eh....., we have to run too?"

Ning Rongrong shocked looked at Grandmaster.

Grandmaster said:

"Just now I said: you all have to suffer the punishment."

Ning Rongrong was immediately somewhat worried,

"But, this isn't fair, me and Zhuqing didn't make any errors!"

Grandmaster calmly said:

"I ask you, who are they to you?"

Ning Rongrong looked blank,

"Fellow students, companions."

Grandmaster said:

“There is a line called ‘shared delights and common pains’, haven’t you heard it? You are companions, wanting to become companions you can trust with your back, do you think you should look at them suffering punishment while you rest?”

“I.....”

Ning Rongrong was unable to reply, but Zhu Zhuqing was already running out.

As the seven one after another reached the Academy gate, they discovered that Grandmaster still discriminated in how he treated their punishment, or in other words, had earlier already prepared well.

Seven baskets woven from bamboo were filled with differently sized stones, on each bamboo basket were straps and a name written.

Among them, the stones in Tang San, Dai Mubai and Ma Hongjun’s baskets were the largest, Xiao Wu, Zhu Zhuqing and Oscar second, the stones in Ning Rongrong’s basket the smallest.

As Ning Rongrong saw the stones in the basket, the resentment in her heart reduced somewhat, thinking to herself, ‘this Grandmaster still isn’t too unreasonable.’

Grandmaster watching the seven running with bamboo baskets on their backs, couldn’t help but reveal a faint smile on his rigid face.

“Forbidden to use spirit power while carrying weight and running long distance, isn’t this punishment a bit heavy? That could be several hundred kilometers. Let alone noon, they might not finish before the sky is dark. I didn’t expect you would be even fiercer than me.”

Flender had at some unknown time already arrived next to Grandmaster, speaking somewhat concerned.

Grandmaster calmly said:

“One cannot achieve glory and wealth without suffering trials and tribulations. I carefully calculated their body condition. It won’t exhaust them. What’s more, you think with their breakfast that good,

they could eat without paying? Without going through a stage of shared delights and common hardships, how could they become companions that trust each other with their backs?"

Flender held up both hands, showing his surrender,

"All right, I told you. You do as you see fit. I know you care about these children even more than me. However, I have no choice but to once again remind you, the Academy's funds are limited."

Grandmaster snorted coldly,

"Can a living person still hold back their urine until they die^[3]? Do you think I am you, the magnificent Spirit Sage, unable to even manage one Academy's funds."

Flender slightly angrily said:

"Indeed I don't think to bow and scrape subserviently to others, otherwise, with my strength being wealthy also isn't a difficult matter. I want to see how you'll settle this issue. You whose cheeks are even thinner than mine."

Grandmaster gave Flender a sideways look,

"Then you just wait and see."

Bamboo baskets on their backs, Tang San and Dai Mubai took the lead in the mad rush out. Once they started running, they realized this punishment as expected was very heavy.

If they could use spirit power, a sixty or seventy kilometres distance in half a day's time wasn't any problem to speak of for them, and could even be completed easily. But, under circumstances without spirit power and still carrying weight, that was not something that could easily be accomplished.

"Mubai, let's first stop a moment."

In the middle of running Tang San suddenly stopped. Right now they hadn't run far, but his forehead already showed traces of sweat.

Although the two had previously both consumed spirit power,

currently they didn't use spirit power to run, in physical strength they clearly were the best among Shrek Seven Devils. Right now, Xiao Wu, Ma Hongjun and Oscar were already falling behind several hundred meters, after them Zhu Zhuqing was already catching up to their steps, Ning Rongrong was last.

"Little San, why?"

Dai Mubai also stopped, somewhat puzzled looking at Tang San,

"Ten laps isn't short, run at once."

Tang San said:

"Mubai, do you still remember? Just now before we set off Teacher said we are a team, he asked us to complete this time's punishment together. You see, Zhuqing and Rongrong are punished together with us. Apart from my running twelve laps, you also have to finish simultaneously. To my understanding of Teacher, he isn't just punishing us, at the same time he's having us exercise. Yesterday Teacher told me that the body is a Spirit Master's foundation, me being able to surpass my rank to absorb the Man Faced Demon Spider's spirit ring is related to the inner qualities of my body. Even more importantly, this time's punishment is perhaps also Teacher's first test for us, what he wants to test is our fellowship. We are a team, speaking of physical strength, perhaps you and I can manage, but they might not. I see, we have to think of some method, seeing how we can let everyone successfully complete the test this time."

As Grandmaster's sole disciple, Tang San clearly understood Grandmaster the best. Hearing his words, Dai Mubai gave a slow nod,

"Perhaps it truly is so, let's wait for them to approach, we'll talk it over first."

Very quickly the five people behind caught up, and Tang San explained his point of view of today's punishment.

Oscar's brows wrinkled minutely, saying:

"I think Tang San is right, Grandmaster should be looking to test us."

The weights we carry differ to some extent, it should be Grandmaster having calculated the extreme boundary of what our physical strength is capable of. It appears Tang San and boss Dai's circumstances should be within the limit of what they're able to accomplish, and would even still have strength left over. Also Fatty should be just exactly reaching his limit. Naturally there are also those exceeding the endurance limit. Only with everyone's cooperation is there a chance for success. Those surpassing the limit of what they can carry, perhaps I am one, and also Rongrong."

After speaking, he couldn't help but reveal a wry smile. Having run two kilometers, he already felt the bamboo basket on his back growing heavier and heavier, sweat visible on his forehead. With such a long distance to go, he realized he certainly wouldn't persevere.

Fatty Ma Hongjun casually said:

"It would be better for us to cheat. If we secretly eat a bit of little Ao's recovery sausage, is there a need to be afraid?"

"Cheat?"

Oscar unhappily glared at Fatty. He was an astute person, he wouldn't do anything foolish,

"Fatty, I only ask you one thing, can you be sure Grandmaster didn't have other teachers supervise us? If by any chance cheating was discovered, I'm afraid the punishment wouldn't be as light as this. Moreover, Grandmaster giving us this kind of punishment, certainly is with his deep intent, it will only benefit us. Right now we have to think of a way to as far as possible save strength."

Part 2

Tang San suddenly spoke up:

"Although Teacher had us run with weights and we can't use spirit power, the total weights we seven carry is so much, only having to bring these rocks to the end of the punishment is naturally possible.

Oscar, give my your rocks.”

Oscar looked blank, smiling mischievously,

“Good brother. However, right now it’s still not necessary. I’ll be seen as inferior like this. Us seven will start from now, running at the speed of the slowest, like this everyone can gather together, and uniformly save the most strength. Once someone is unable to persevere, we will mutually help readjust the weight. Thus, we will as far as possible be able to conserve strength. Right?”

Ning Rongrong smiled to the side:

“Little Ao, I didn’t notice, but you are extraordinarily astute.”

On Oscar’s face hung an expression like it was only a matter of course,

“Don’t you know as a child I was called the bright little prince? This is nothing.”

Dai Mubai was the oldest of everyone, his strength was also the greatest, and as boss he properly took the lead to set an example,

“Don’t speak nonsense. Gossiping is still wasting strength. We’ll run and handle it according to what little Ao said.”

Immediately, the seven resumed their long distance running.

Without doubt, among the seven, it was naturally as auxiliary system Spirit Masters Oscar and Ning Rongrong’s strength was the weakest, so everyone ran according to their speed. Advancing at the same speed, in the direction of Suotuo City.

The first lap was finished at this kind of speed.

Actually running, everyone gradually felt the pressure of the carried weight. If it was only ordinary running, even if it was without using spirit power, this roughly six kilometer round trip could not be said to be any burden to them. Spirit power transforming the body gave them stamina far exceeding that of a normal person, even auxiliary system Spirit Masters like Oscar and Ning Rongrong were no exception.

With the weight, the body clearly became unbalanced. After one round trip, Ning Rongrong and Oscar were already drenched in sweat, the others also showed some weariness.

Ning Rongrong doubtless had the most lacking physical strength of everyone, although Oscar also was an auxiliary system Spirit Master, he after all had broken through thirtieth rank, his body had been improved in every kind of attribute by having the third spirit ring, his condition was a lot better than Ning Rongrong.

The weights carried by Tang San and Dai Mubai were fifteen kilogram rocks. The weights Xiao Wu, Zhu Zhuqing and Ma Hongjun were ten kilograms. Although Ning Rongrong and Oscar only carried five kilograms, right now it felt to them as if they carried mountains. Body growing heavier and heavier, they could only clench their teeth to maintain their velocity.

At the Academy gate, what made everyone somewhat astonished, was Grandmaster standing in the gate looking at them running back from their first lap.

“Everyone drink a bit of water, then keep going.”

Grandmaster’s words as always were precise and comprehensive.

In a bucket was warm water, with a slightly salty taste, apparently mixed with salt. Under Grandmaster’s supervision, everyone was only allowed to drink one cup of warm water, then immediately urged them to once again keep on with their punishment run.

As time passed, the great sphere of fire overhead gradually drew closer to its zenith, also gradually increasing the temperature. After drinking salt water, everyone’s strength recovered a bit, to Tang San and Dai Mubai it was nothing, but Oscar and Ning Rongrong clearly felt themselves regain some strength.

Watching the students gradually recede into the distance, Grandmaster stood expressionlessly in place, but watching the seven return together, in the depths of his expression was clearly displayed a hint of satisfaction.

Carrying the bucket he walked inside the Academy. Right now, he

wasn't only a teacher instructing students, at the same time he was a senior concerned for them. What he had them do wasn't at all mistreating the students, rather letting them obtain genuine exercise.

The second round trip, the third round trip, the fourth.....

Each time everyone returned to the Academy, they would drink the appropriately warmed salt water prepared by Grandmaster. The warm water was easily absorbed, the salt replenishing what was drained by their exertion. Even Ning Rongrong and Oscar, both felt themselves somewhat miraculously able to persevere through running the fourth lap, besides drinking water, they didn't pause anywhere.

But, as the fifth lap began, Oscar and Ning Rongrong's speed had already clearly dropped, the scenery before their eyes already starting to become indistinct, both legs heavy like filled with lead, the weight of the bamboo baskets on their backs even more resembling mountains.

With uniform speed, the others had still preserved strength, although right now everyone were already sweating profusely, mentally they were very well preserved.

"Little Ao, give me your stone."

Tang San said to Oscar.

Dai Mubai also simultaneously held out a hand to Ning Rongrong.

This time, Oscar and Ning Rongrong didn't object, they clearly understood that their strength was already somewhat overdrawn, going on like this, perhaps they might not be able to persevere with this lap.

Tang San and Dai Mubai's weights went from fifteen to twenty kilograms, inside the bamboo baskets were two stones. Five kilograms didn't seem heavy, but when their physical strength was substantially used up, these simple five kilograms already clearly was a burden to the two. Although they could still maintain the speed, the two's breathing clearly became rougher.

Just the opposite, losing the five kilogram pressure, Oscar and Ning Rongrong had a kind of transcendent feeling, as if their whole bodies could float lightly, gasping large mouthfuls of breath, their running immediately became more effortless, not only recovering their original speed, even still with a feeling of doing it skillfully and easily.

The fifth, sixth, seventh, three laps concluded like this. As the eighth lap began, already two double hours had passed. Right now the sun had already wandered by the zenith, noon already passed.

Everyone's breathing had become difficult, lungs scorching hot as if set on fire, each step they took left behind a clear watermark on the ground, that was the sweat flowing from their bodies. From the start of the last lap, the salt water they received at the Academy gate already became two cups. Furthermore a brief rest. Grandmaster didn't urge them, still after each time they finished a lap giving them the prepared warm salt water.

"Dying, I'm dying."

The speaker was Ma Hongjun, staggering, almost falling to the ground, Fatty came to a stop, both hands supporting on his knees, gasping for large mouthfuls of breath. His plump face had already become pale, seemingly each breath was already extremely difficult.

Everyone stopped one after the other, this moment, everyone were unexpectedly unable to speak. Looking at each other, they discovered each of their comrades' clothes were already soaked through with sweat. The most impressive would be Zhu Zhuqing, although she was the youngest of them all, among the three girls she was the most developed, her soaked through clothes stuck close to her body, drawing the outline of astonishing curves.

Unfortunately, right now no one had the energy to pay attention to this scene, each and everyone stood in their place constantly gasping for breath.

Originally Tang San and Dai Mubai shouldn't have been this exhausted, but they carried Ning Rongrong and Oscar's additional weights, compared to the others their burdens were much greater. Among the seven, the only one appearing relaxed was Xiao Wu,

Xiao Wu had also reached thirtieth rank, but the weight she carried was the same as Ma Hongjun and Zhu Zhuqing. In addition her own body weight was light, right now she was still performing skillfully and easily.

After panting for a full five minutes, everyone gradually calmed.

Ma Hongjun couldn't help but say:

"In any case we've missed lunch, it would be better for us to slow a bit. I'm dying, keeping on running, might wear me to death."

Dai Mubai scowled:

"Slow? Didn't you notice the salt water Grandmaster gave us was the same temperature each time? But our speed dropped continuously. Clearly, Grandmaster has calculated the condition of our physical strength. Running too slowly, perhaps there will still be additional punishment. Although Grandmaster is a bit strict with out training, he is also good to us. We must persevere. Fatty, give me your weight."

Ma Hongjun somewhat shocked looked at Dai Mubai,

"Boss Dai, you're still all right?"

Dai Mubai stuck out his chest,

"Fatty, remember, a man can't say he's unable. Bring it."

Part 3

When Dai Mubai put Ma Hongjun's rocks into the basket on his back, Tang San also went beside Zhu Zhuqing. Though he didn't know why Dai Mubai didn't help Zhu Zhuqing split the weight, Tang San's body conditions were similar to Dai Mubai, unlike Zhu Zhuqing, who was silent but obviously consumed.

"I'll help you, Zhuqing." Tang San grabbed at the basket behind Zhu Zhuqing.

Zhu Zhuqing twisted herself, dodging Tang San's hand. "No need, I

can still keep on going. You will run two more laps than us, if you waste all your energy now, how will you continue later on?"

Tang San looked at Zhu Zhuqing and stared blankly. He suddenly discovered, she didn't seem to be that cold after all.

The journey started again. This time, everyone slowed down even more. Though Dai Mubai didn't say anything, it was obvious that his steps became heavier, leaving the most sweat with every step. The weight Ma Hongjun gave was ten kilograms. Increasing his weight to thirty kilograms when he was already past his extreme greatly affected the depletion of his power.

After the eighth lap, when Grandmaster gave them the warm salt water, he deliberately looked at everyone's basket, but said nothing.

During the ninth lap, though without weight, Oscar and Ning Rongrong's strength was bordering their extreme. Ma Hongjun recovered slightly, Xiao Wu could still continue, but Zhu Zhuqing's steps were getting slower and slower. But unexpectedly, Tang San seemed to have past his extreme and didn't look like he was used up.

Seeing Suo Tuo City in sight, the ninth lap was half finished. Suddenly, Dai Mubai stumbled, his entire body falling forward.

If it were before, relying on his own strength, Dai Mubai just needed to straighten up to rebalance himself, but right now his strength consumption was too severe.

Tang San was always beside Dai Mubai. Seeing him about to fall, he quickly lunged forward, catching Dai Mubai's shoulder.

Dai Mubai's double irises have already combined. Tang San saw this once when they met danger, so it should be a sign of reaching his extreme.

Dai Mubai didn't stand up by himself. He leaned his entire body on Tang San's shoulder, his chest like a windbox, fiercely going up and down. He looked like he was almost totally dehydrated.

"Boss Dai, are you ok?" Everyone quickly crowded up, asking

sincerely.

Tang San didn't utter a single word, but took the heaviest fifteen kilogram rock from Dai Mubai's basket and put it into his own basket.

"Little San, you don't need to do that, I can still go on." Dai Mubai barely stood up, eyes revealing unswerving determination. Looking at Tang San, he said, "You even withstood the pain from the Man Faced Demon Spider's spirit ring, why can't I withstand this. I can do this. Brothers, let's continue, no one fall behind."

As they talked, Dai Mubai forcefully took the fifteen kilogram rock from Tang San's basket back to his own basket.

"Boss Dai, give me back my own." Ma Hongjun suddenly said. There's only half a lap from finishing the entire punishment. Everyone knows Dai Mubai won't be able to finish.

Ning Rongrong suddenly stepped forward, "And me, I feel a lot better, I can hold my weight."

Tang San said: "Rongrong is fine, Fatty, you try to hold it for a while."

Ma Hongjun's own weight fell back into his own basket, decreasing Dai Mubai's weight by ten kilograms. Under Tang San's persistent request, Ning Rongrong's weight of five kilograms in Dai Mubai's basket fell into Tang San's basket as well, increasing his weight to twenty-five kilograms.

The journey continued. Every step was that challenging. Dai Mubai, with fifteen less kilograms, with his resilience withstood it all.

The ninth lap, under everyone's mutual assist, was finished. Though they were still running, their speed was really not any faster than walking. From the start of the punishment, three hours have passed.

Gulping down salt water, the seven people all looked like they just came out of water. Grandmaster still stood aside, not saying anything.

Dai Mubai forced his mind to clear, "Brothers, we still have one last

lap, everyone persevere.”

Oscar suddenly said: “Little San, give my weight back. There’s only one last round, I can stand it.”

Tang San blanked. He suddenly discovered Oscar’s eyes had something more, but looking at his shaking legs, Tang San shook his head, “No, I can still do it.”

Oscar walked beside Tang San, sweat dripping down his face, but his gaze became more resolute. “If you view me as a brother, then give it back to me. I can do it.”

Ning Rongrong was already gasping for breath, face white, but when she saw Oscar take the five kilogram rock from Tang San’s basket, she couldn’t help but say, “Little, Little.....Ao....., You.....today.....really are.....a man.”

Oscar was already too tired to laugh, so he stuck out his chest, acting like it should be like that.

Shrek’s Seven Monster are all consumed, but their minds were not at all relaxed. Sometimes, the difference between the talented and the mediocre was their resolute will. Surviving through an extreme means everything will change.

The tenth lap of the punishment finally started. This time, everyone really couldn’t run anymore, barely shifting their feet, step by step. Are we not able to do it? No, we are, we’re all able to do it.

Carrying the rocks on their back, taking heavy steps, they slowly walked towards their final goal.

Walking one kilometer, Oscar almost fainted. The rocks in his basket went back to Tang San’s.

Walking two kilometers, Zhu Zhuqing’s weight went into Xiao Wu’s basket.

Walking three kilometers, Ning Rongrong fainted. Tang San gave his rocks to Dai Mubai while he carried Ning Rongrong on his back.

Coming back one kilometer, Oscar fainted. Zhu Zhuqing took back

her rocks. Xiao Wu's rocks went to Ma Hongjun while Ning Rongrong went on Xiao Wu and Tang San picked up Oscar.

Coming back two kilometers, Zhu Zhuqing fainted. Dai Mubai barely picked her up.

Only five hundred meters from the finish, the basket in front of Tang San already had Zhu Zhuqing's rock as well as Dai Mubai's fifteen kilograms while piggybacking Oscar.

Dai Mubai carried Zhu Zhuqing.

Xiao Wu carried Ning Rongrong.

Ma Hongjun carried twenty kilograms of weight.

They were almost shifting step by step towards the end.

"Put, put me down...."Ning Rongrong's weak voice sounded behind Xiao Wu. Xiao Wu stumbled, almost falling to the ground, and Ning Rongrong also slid off of her back. The two helped each other, slowly walking step by step forward.

Oscar also woke up, struggled to fall of Tang San, and with Tang San's lending an arm, they walked forward.

Zhu Zhuqing hasn't woke yet. Though she didn't say much, she was way more past her extreme than Oscar and Ning Rongrong. Though Ma Hongjun was fat, his stamina was much better than Zhu Zhuqing. Dai Mubai also helped him carry his weight a distance, so his situation was much better.

Of course, Ma Hongjun right now was at his max as well. Grouping up with Tang San and Oscar, the three helped each other forward.

If there was only one person punished, with Ning Rongrong or Oscar's strength, they might have already fallen.

However, all seven were punished. Under the help of each other, the determination in their hearts were already aroused.

Their sights were already blurred and they could only vaguely see the finish. Their bodies are now only powered by their willpower.

Tang San carried heavy rocks, both hands helping out Ma Hongjun and Oscar, helping them split a bit of their body weight. Though he couldn't use spirit power, under the extreme circumstances, the tough aspect of his Mysterious Heaven Skill was starting to exhibit itself, or else he also wouldn't be able to persist until now.

Dai Mubai's back was already curved from pressure, his evil eyes tinted with red. Every step felt like he had millions of tons on him.

Four hundred meters.....three hundred meters.....two hundred meters.....one hundred meters.

Grandmaster's stiff face appeared in front of everyone. Seeing them helping each other slowly shuffle forward, even Grandmaster couldn't help but be moved.

They used an entire hour for the last lap, but they finally made it.

Putong, Putong....

All seven of them fell onto the ground at the same time. Oscar, Ning Rongrong and Ma Hongjun almost fainted simultaneously.

*

Notes

1. (瞬移) "Wink Move"
2. (闪电兔)
3. Idiom, not entirely sure of the translation, but the meaning is roughly "as long as you're alive there is always another way".

042 – Grandmaster Is A Devil

Part 1

Dai Mubai fell beside Zhu Zhuqing breathing heavily, his entire body slightly shaking.

Xiao Wu's scorpion braid was already in disorder, sweat dripping unceasingly, her lips trembling.

Tang San moved Ma Hongjun and Oscar so they could lie on their own baskets, and he took out all the extra weight. His vision at this moment was also hazy, but some things in his mind still supported him.

For others, the punishment or training was completed. But for him, not yet.

Holding the table that held water buckets and bearing fifteen kilograms of weight, Tang San barely stood up and started walking step by step forwards.

Though he didn't need to support others, his steps were already staggering.

"Brother, I'll accompany you."

Xiao Wu also stood up by holding the table, but she fell onto the ground before she could take a second step. Though her body conditions were a lot better than Zhu Zhuqing's, she carried Ning Rongrong for quite a distance, so she was also at her extreme.

"Little San, I'll accompany you too."

It was Dai Mubai. Also holding his own weight, Dai Mubai staggered up beside Tang San. The two looked at each other, their pale faces barely squeezing out a strange smile. Almost simultaneously, they grasped each other's right hands.

The next moment, the two that withstood the most in the “punishment” fell onto the ground, taking the path of their other friends.

Shrek’s Seven Monsters, seven punished, seven on the ground, fainted.

Grandmaster looked at them fall one by one, but never moved. Until Tang San and Dai Mubai both fainted, he finally showed a faint smile.

“Never abandoning, never giving up. Good, good.”

Flender, bringing Zhao Wuji and a few other teachers quietly appeared beside Grandmaster.

“Grandmaster, you’re good too. Ruthless enough.”

Grandmaster didn’t mind the discontent in Flender’s words. Waving his head, he said, “It’s time to bring them over there.”

Including Grandmaster, all the teachers quickly took off the kids’ baskets, carrying them towards the academy.

When Tang San woke up, he found himself in the dormitory again. Warmness invaded his body from all directions, the comfortable feeling almost making him moan.

Composing himself, Tang San found he was naked inside a giant wood cask. The cask was full of gray liquid. Oscar was on the other side, deep in his sleep. Because of the extra two casks, the room already felt overcrowded.

With a stir of the liquid, a not too pungent medicinal smell wafted into his nose. Tang San wiggled his nose, and he immediately understood vaguely.

Coming to this world, though he never detailedly researched about the medicine in this world, he roughly knew a bit. The drug ingredients of this world were very similar to the world he was in. The liquid in the cask should’ve been boiled from some ingredients that mainly helped with relaxing muscles and reinforcing the fundamentals. That’s why after that much exercise, he didn’t feel

much pain after waking up. Only slight soreness in his two legs and a slightly weak body.

Later Tang San found out that to keep the casks warm, every once in a while they had to add more hot water. The girls' casks were managed by a few village women they hired.

On the side of the cask was a slip of paper with Grandmaster's handwriting.

"Come to the cafeteria to eat when you wake up."

Seeing "to eat", Tang San suddenly felt his stomach grumble, hunger welling up.

Standing up from the water, he discovered that beside the two big casks, there were also two smaller baskets. Inside had clean water, obviously for them to clean themselves. The water was cold, so when Tang San jumped in he couldn't help but shiver. He instantly felt his mind clear out, and the soreness in his body slowly faded away.

Quickly washing off the liquid and changing into a clean outfit, Tang San walked out the dormitory. To his surprise, the skies were already covered in stars. In the silent night, insects chirped occasionally, giving him a tranquil feel.

Stretching hard, his entire body started cracking, as if his entire body was fully extended. Breathing in the fresh air in exchange for the stale air inside, he walked towards the cafeteria.

Far away, you could already see the lights of the cafeteria. When Tang San walked into the cafeteria, he found one person gorging himself.

Hearing footsteps, the eating person looked back towards Little San. It was Dai Mubai. His superior spirit power allowed him to wake up faster.

"Little San, quickly come eat. It tastes pretty damn good."

Dai Mubai's double pupils had already recovered to its normal state. Looking at Tang San, he instantly smiled. They had already shared

their joys and sorrows many times, going through trouble and accidents together. This empathetic feeling didn't need any words to express itself. They looked at each other and could already feel each other's friendship.

Sitting beside Dai Mubai, he found six more servings of food on the table, clearly prepared for the others. On the table were also paper slips, also of Grandmaster's handwriting.

"When you are done eating, wash the dishes. Dump the water in the casks of your dormitory and clean them. Do not sleep, cultivate until day rise. Meet at early morning for class."

Dinner was very sumptuous. A big bowl of fragrant stewed meat, fully five big snow white steamed buns, one bowl of thick soup, and a platter of vegetables and fruits.

His stomach's rumbling made Tang San have no time for small talk, instantly starting to gorge himself, clearing out all the food in front of him.

Good, very good, extremely good. After great amounts of exercise, the replenishment of the food felt like it was instantly absorbed by the body.

Dai Mubai was finished eating when Tang San was still gorging himself, leaning on the table and looking at Tang San. Seeing he is about to finish eating, he said:

"Little San, Grandmaster sure is ruthless, a lot more fierce than Dean Flender. Seeing Grandmaster's message, I'm afraid our future days will not be pleasant. Is this how Grandmaster taught you before?"

Tang San shook his head, saying :

"Teacher taught me mostly theoretical knowledge. Training of this type was a first for me as well. However, yesterday Teacher told me, as a Spirit Master, our body's are our foundations. The fact that I can withstand the beyond extreme Man Faced Demon Spider spirit ring's attack is inseparable from my strong body. Only with a strong body can one withstand more spirit power. That is possibly why

Teacher wanted us to increase our body's basic training."

Dai Mubai laughed bitterly.

"This isn't as simple as increasing. Grandmaster's training for us was exactly based on our extremes. If it wasn't for our body qualities, we probably wouldn't be able to even move for days. Although the cask of weird liquid definitely helped."

"I'm starving to death, where to food?"

A figure speedily ran in from outside. Without even greeting Tang San and Dai Mubai, she instantly pounced at the food.

It was Xiao Wu. Looking at her rosy face, Tang San smiled. Clearly, Xiao Wu has also recovered from the extreme exercise.

Xiao Wu ate and saw the paper slips on the table. She immediately gestured towards Tang San, telling them to talk to her after she's done eating.

Waking up from the deep slumber and eating, Tang San felt very lazy and didn't want to move at all. Mimicking Dai Mubai, he also leaned on the table, looking at Xiao Wu's unwomanly like gorging.

Other than having only two steamed buns, the girls had the same food as them. Though Xiao Wu didn't have a big mouth, her eating wasn't impeded by the slightest. The food was demolished in a moment's time.

The fourth to come wasn't Oscar, the only other one above rank thirty, but Zhu Zhuqing.

When Zhu Zhuqing walked in, her face was very calm until she saw Dai Mubai, then she deliberately stiffened her face, but in her eyes, Tang San clearly saw no rejection.

Zhu Zhuqing's eating pose was a lot more graceful than Xiao Wu, chewing carefully. Every motion looked elegant, but behind this elegance was speed. If not for the quickly decreasing food, Tang San really couldn't believe her apparently slow movements could eat so fast.

“So comfortable, I’ve finished eating.”

With no care at all, Xiao Wu lied against Tang San’s shoulder,

“Little San, did you run the last two laps?”

Tang San laughed bitterly and shook his head,

“No, after you fainted, Dai Mubai and I also fainted. When I woke up I was in a cask full of medicine liquid.”

Xiao Wu’s charming face suddenly reddened. Sitting up straight, she said quietly:

“You weren’t wearing anything as well?”

Tang San’s mind blanked, unconsciously nodding his head.

Xiao Wu stuck out her tongue,

“In our dormitory there was a paper slip telling us not to worry, our clothes were taken off by villager women. Come eat at the cafeteria.”

Tang San chuckled, saying:

“Xiao Wu, you look very cute when your face is red, just like an apple.”

As he was talking, he caringly pinched her face. Xiao Wu only looked at him accusingly but didn’t stop him.

Dai Mubai said:

“Oscar and the others haven’t woken up, probably too weary. Let’s go back to cultivate, we still don’t know what sort of devilish training Grandmaster will tell us to do tomorrow.”

Tang San nodded. Just as he was about to clean up his dishes, Xiao Wu stopped him.

“You can go. Washing dishes isn’t something you boys should do. Leave it to us.”

Part 2

Tang San smiled faintly, rubbed Xiao Wu's head and walked outside.

Dai Mubai's gaze fell on Zhu Zhuqing. Zhu Zhuqing hasn't finished eating but she emptied one hand and stacked up Dai Mubai's dishes as well. Though she didn't talk, her actions spoke for her.

Dai Mubai was exulted. He obviously knew Zhu Zhuqing was shy, so he didn't say anything and chased Tang San out.

When the two walked out of the cafeteria door, Xiao Wu spoke again. "Washing dishes isn't something you males should do, but we'll leave those giant casks for you to empty and clean. Remember to wake up early to help us!"

Tang San staggered, almost tripping on the door frame. He turned around just to see Xiao Wu waving at him with a sly smile.

A night went by without conversation. When Tang San woke again it was already daybreak. His biological clock woke him up. Last night's cultivation made him fall into deep sleep. It felt like he was totally immersed in the inner power of the Mysterious Heaven Skill. He didn't even notice when Oscar went to eat.

Last night before cultivation he already cleared out his own cask. Now the dormitory was spacey again. Oscar was also cultivating on his bed, his cask clean as well.

Silently leaving, cultivating his Purple Demon Eyes, and eating. After all this, Tang San went to knock on Xiao Wu's door. Xiao Wu and Ning Rongrong were already up and went to eat. Tang San helped them clean up the heavy casks.

A familiar clock gong sounded and Shrek's Seven Monsters almost immediately rushed to the field.

Grandmaster was already standing on the field waiting for them. Looking at Grandmaster's calm and stiff face, other than Tang San, everyone couldn't help but feel nervous, even a bit scared.

"Very well. Today everyone came quickly." Grandmaster nodded,

gaze habitually sweeping over their faces. "Yesterday's actions made me very satisfied. Though some people didn't finish their punishments, what made me satisfied was on you, I saw the spirit of not abandoning and not giving up. As buddies, how can you be at ease to give your backs to your friends? What you need is trust. You all did well, the trust in each other let you finish the test yesterday better.

"Before we start today's lesson, Tang San, go finish your punishment.

"Yes." Tang San said and turned around to run outside the Academy.

"Little San, I'll accompany you like I said yesterday." Xiao Wu skipped happily towards Tang San.

Ning Rongrong suddenly said: "Let's go too. Aren't we a whole entity?"

Oscar stretched his arm. "Warming up works too. This time it isn't a punishment, its just accompanying him, so we don't need to carry weights."

Fatty, frowning and worried, said: "Looks like I really have to lose weight. It wasn't easy for me to get all this fat!"

Dai Mubai and Zhu Zhuqing already ran out, "Stop talking, quickly catch up!"

Whole entity. What a good whole entity. Grandmaster slightly stunned, looked at the leaving teens.

Clenching his fists, Grandmaster silently decided he'll do his best to educate these teens. It was also from that day that Grandmaster let Shrek's Seven Monsters fully realize the meaning of a devil. When monsters meet devils, what happens?

Grandmaster's training for them was simple. One or two hours of fighting per day, with every day's situation different. Two sides of fighting were randomly decided. Sometimes 1v1, sometimes 2v2, sometimes 3v3, and sometimes even 3v4.

Everyday Grandmaster would give special restrictions. For example, which spirit abilities they are allowed to use, what they are not allowed to use, and other requests.

After fighting training, they would start their physical exercise. Same as the first day, during physical training, they can't use their spirit power, and they had to finish it together. Grandmaster had myriads of ways to train them. The simplest was weighted runs. More complicated were weighted hiking and other methods. But no matter which method, it had to make Shrek's Seven Monsters reach their limits. After a period of time, they were already used to waking up at night in the medicinal casks.

Though this devilish training was hard, there was one thing Grandmaster wasn't miserly about. With eating, he tried his best to change it up all the time to satisfy everyone's desire for food.

Because of the dense schedule of training, three months passed. Ma Hongjun, possibly because of consuming too much energy in the training, didn't even go once to Suo Tuo City to settle his evil fire. The forging tools that Tang San ordered were delivered ages ago, but he didn't have time to make hidden weapons. He didn't even have time to assemble the first batch of parts the smithy finished.

Tang San, Oscar and Xiao Wu officially registered and became Spirit Elders. To not create a sensation, when they went to register, Grandmaster specially let them wear specially made masks. Though it brought some suspicion, hiding one's appearance was fairly common and they still successfully received their monthly pay.

Three months of devilish training didn't improve Shrek's Seven Monsters' spirit power greatly. In the period, only Ma Hongjun's spirit power rose by one rank. But, after the three months of extreme training, their bodies qualities underwent a massive change.

Now, if Tang San and Dai Mubai did the weighted run like the first day, they would have to shoulder over fifty kilograms and still not reach their extreme. One has to know, if they don't use spirit power, that is already a scary number.

Every person's body was improved greatly. Under massive exercise

and competent nutrients, the first obvious change was on their stature.

Dai Mubai clearly became sturdier, his evil pupils gaining a powerful sheen. His entire body looked like it contained explosive energy. The him now really looked like a fierce tiger coming down a hill.^[1]

Oscar's change was even more obvious. He became an entire circle skinnier, but if you looked at only the appearance, no one would think he was a Support Type Spirit Master. His strong figure could definitely match most Fighting Type Spirit Masters. Of course, his voice was still that soft, and his giant beard and double peach blossom eyes didn't change.

Tang San's appearance barely changed. He still looked so normal, but his entire body looked more reserved. His figure wasn't really thick and strong, but he grew a bit taller. He was like a very normal teen, the sort that you wouldn't notice if he was in a crowd. Whats surprising is Tang San's spirit power was already rank thirty two. This wasn't from the three months of training, but from the Man Faced Demon Spider's spirit ring. Possibly because of breaking his limit, the Man Faced Demon Spider brought great pain, but the benefits were also great. Other than the spirit ring and spirit bone, even his spirit power rose to rank thirty two, making everyone envious. Of course, though they were envious, none of them dared to absorb spirit rings outside of their limits.

Ma Hongjun became a full two circles skinnier and didn't look as bloated as before. Though still fat, he looked powerful. Spirit power reaching rank twenty eight, it was striding forwards with its head high towards rank thirty. His bodily changes made him look a lot more acute.

Part 3

Xiao Wu was still her old self, and had the least changes appearance wise. Not even her skin was tanned, and she was always lively and happy.

However, during everyday's fighting, she caused quite a lot of suffering. Her third spirit ability "Teleportation" appear and disappear unpredictably. Even Dai Mubai and Tang San suffered losses against her.

Good thing her teleportation distance is only within five meters.

Even so, paired up with Waist Bow and Demon Confusion, the three spirit abilities' melee fighting capabilities are terrifying.

Ning Rongrong, compared to her first few days of coming to the Academy, lost almost all her haughtiness. Her face emitted more heroic spirit, and her reserved character made her even more charming.

This ignited the hope of Oscar again, who had already given up. Of course, with these three months, even if Oscar wanted to woo her, he didn't have the strength.

As for Zhu Zhuqing, it has to be said that her willpower isn't any worse than a man's. She did not make a single whine the entire three months. Not only did she withstand it all, she sometimes even actively asked for a harder training.

Her body was an entire circle skinner, but as a Agility System Spirit Master, her speed, with a stronger body, was also improved.

The three months of devilish training finally ended yesterday. Grandmaster gave Shrek's Seven Monsters seven days of vacation for them to adjust their conditions.

Finally having the chance to rest, Oscar went head first into his bed and slept. Tang San cultivated as usual. Because Zhu Zhuqing insisted on exercising more, Dai Mubai actively requested to accompany her. Xiao Wu and Ning Rongrong decided to be like Oscar, choosing to use this rare vacation for rest.

While listening to Oscar's snoring, Tang San assembled the parts sent from the smithy. He finally had time today. The craftsmanship of the Tie Brothers made Tang San very satisfied. So far, the Silent Sleeve Dart, Powder Shooting Shadow, Taut Back Head-Lowering Crossbow, and other weapon parts were already assembled. Only

the Godly Zhuge Crossbow had higher requirements, so he was still working on it. Tang San wanted to, with these days of rest, not only cultivate but also distribute the hidden weapons and teach everyone how to use it.

Engrossed in the assembly of hidden weapons, time flew by. Only until Oscar woke up and told him to go eat that Tang San discovered the sunlight outside has become moonlight and a day has passed.

The two walked out of the dormitory, walking towards the cafeteria. Just as they were walking, suddenly they saw a person wobbly walking over.

“The fuck, who is this, why do they have the head of a pig?”

Oscar cried out excessively.

Tang San focused his gaze. The swaying, walking unsteadily figure was unexpectedly Ma Hongjun, except he looked very ragged. Not only were his clothes very torn, his plump face was swollen by a full circle. His eyes were bruised purple and the corner of his mouth still had a crimson stain.

“Fatty, what happened?”

Tang San quickly rushed forward to support the tottering Ma Hongjun. Oscar skillfully summoned his Recovering Sausage and passed it over.

Ma Hongjun didn't decline, gobbling down the sausage and finally looked a bit better.

“Fuck, this time was quite embarrassing.”

Ma Hongjun's eyes were filled with hatred. His face was originally plump and his eyes small. Now that his face was swollen, his eyes were barely visible in all the fat.

“Who beat you up?”

Tang San's voice clearly had a chilling edge.

Three months of devilish training had passed with everyone helping

each other. They were so much more than classmates. Seeing his brother beaten up, how could Tang San not be angry?

Ma Hongjun angrily said:

“I got beaten up by a vulgar uncle. Embarrassing, really damn embarrassing.”

Oscar furrowed his brows,

“Fatty, it wasn’t because you were trying to be another person’s love rival is it?”

Ma Hongjun said furiously:

“What love rival, evidently it was I who saw that girl first. That vulgar guy was really shameless.”

Hearing Ma Hongjun say that, Tang San instantly understood a bit. Clearly, like what Oscar said, Fatty was beaten up when he was trying to settle his evil fire.

Tang San patted Ma Hongjun on his shoulder,

“Let’s go eat something at the cafeteria first, we can talk there.”

With Oscar’s Recovering Sausages’ help, Ma Hongjun’s body condition was a lot better. Then the three walked into the cafeteria.

In the cafeteria, Dai Mubai was sitting there eating furiously, but Zhu Zhuqing wasn’t beside him.

“What the fuck, fatty, how did you get like this?”

Seeing Ma Hongjun’s unkempt appearance, Dai Mubai was also alarmed. He was a lot more short tempered, jumping from his seat and his evil pupils shining angrily.

Ma Hongjun scowled miserably.

“Boss Dai, you have to back me up! You see how they beat me up. Even my handsome face is now distorted. How can I get girls in the future!”

Oscar chuckled.

“Handsome face my ass, swollen like a pig. What actually happened, tell us first.”

Ma Hongjun pulled over a chair and sat down and finally started talking.

“I left this afternoon, and decided to go to Suo Tuo City to resolve my evil fire problems. At the place, I found a really hot girl inside this tiny brothel. Just when I wanted to call her over to resolve my problem, a vulgar uncle came. He looked about forty, with short hair and at first sight, he looked trustworthy. However, upon closer inspection, the guy’s eyes was full of an obscene gaze.”

Dai Mubai said: “So you fought him?”

Fatty stuck out his chest and said:

“Of course, he already bullied me, you think I should endure it? At first I just wanted to chase him out, but he turned out to be a Spirit Master as well, and a four ringed Spirit Ancestor. In a moment I was beaten up and thrown out of the brothel. What was most intolerable was he flicked my dick, and said it was tiny. As a man, this sort of insult wasn’t something I could endure. So I got up and fought him again, and I became like this. You guys didn’t see his arrogant face. Boss Dai, Ao Second Brother, Tang Third Brother, you guys have to support me! If not for my strong body from recent training, I might not even be able to come back.”

Ma Hongjun was obviously beaten up quite bad, especially spiritually. Crying and saying everything, Tang San and the others furrowed their brows.

Tang San asked:

“What is that person’s name?”

Ma Hongjun wiped his face with his sleeve.

“I heard the brothel keeper call him Bu Le^[2], but it probably isn’t his real name.”

“Bu Le? Only a Spirit Ancestor and he’s already bullying my brother? Let’s go, Fatty you lead us. Let’s go check him out. Little San, Little Ao, are you guys going?”

Dai Mubai could understand Fatty’s mood right now. Fighting over a girl was something he did often before as well, but most of the times he won the fight. Ever since Zhu Zhuqing came, he finally restrained himself. Also, Fatty was beaten up quite badly. Though he didn’t suffer damage to bones or tendons, he still lost all his face.

Tang San nodded.

“Let’s go check him out together.”

This sort of stuff can’t be resolved with logic. Though one can’t say who was right and who was wrong, people are biased towards their own side. If a man’s brother was beaten up and he didn’t take revenge, then he wasn’t a man.

Oscar laughed evilly.

“Of course I have to go. I want to see who can be even more vulgar than Fatty. Even if we can’t beat him, with my mushroom sausages, we can still run.”

The moment Ma Hongjun heard the three were willing to fight with him, he was elated.

“Good brothers. Lets go now. We might even be able to catch him coming out.”

Finished talking, he instantly jumped up and ran outside, as if his wounds didn’t hurt anymore.

Dai Mubai took hold of Ma Hongjun.

“What’s with the rush. You still have to eat first, then you’ll have the strength. Also, tell us the guy’s spirit. Knowing yourself and the enemy is the key to victory.”

Fatty, though face full of urgency, had an empty stomach, so he sat down and ate while explaining the fight.

“The person isn’t tall, only about one meter sixty tall. Dark face, as if he just came out of a coal pit. His spirit was very weird. Not attack, not defense, not speed. It feels like, feels like...”

Fatty’s gaze fell onto Tang San.

“Feels like Third Brother’s spirit, only different in shape.”

Tang San and Dai Mubai looked at each other, saying simultaneously,

“Control System Spirit Master?”

Fatty nodded.

“It should be Control System. His spirit looked like two pink semicircular covers, about the size of a steamed bun. The moment he summoned his spirit, he wore it on his head, don’t even ask how disgusting that was. He only used two spirit abilities when he fought me. The first made the two covers big, blocking my Phoenix Fire Wire. The second ability utilized the two covers and with one in front and one behind, they entangled me. The covers felt very soft and flexible. I don’t know what material it is, but even my Phoenix Fire couldn’t damage it. After it entangled me, It trapped me like a cocoon^[3] and then I became his punching bag.”

Two pink covers? What type of spirit is that? Even with years of studying with Grandmaster, Tang San couldn’t figure it out.

Tang San said:

“That means, he should still have two more spirit abilities that he hasn’t used.”

Fatty said:

“Third Brother, with you three Spirit Elders and I, a rank twenty seven Spirit Grandmaster, are you scared of him? Also, you are a Control System Spirit Master as well!”

He misunderstood Tang San. He thought Tang San was scared.

Tang San said:

“Control System Spirit Masters are special. Under 1v1 circumstances, Control System Spirit Masters have a great advantage. Fatty, if we meet him, you focus on harassing him from far away. Boss Dai and I will go up front and Little Ao will be responsible for replenishments. He definitely won't be able to match us. Control System Spirit Masters aren't like Strength Type Spirit Masters. As long as they can't control everyone, they will lose. If I guessed correctly, his spirit should counter fire naturally, or else your evil fire couldn't have done nothing. When we fight, I will control him. Though my spirit power is lesser than his, I can at least harass him so he can't control us. Control Type Spirit Masters' close range capabilities cannot block your attacks, even if he is rank forty.”

Notes

1. (下山猛虎) Idiom to describe a fierce and strong person. Imagine a giant tiger running down a hill at you. Yeah.
2. 不乐 (Not Happy)
3. Originally 粽子 (glutinous rice and choice of filling wrapped in leaves and boiled)

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Publication platform	—	Shumilou.co
Publisher	—	<u>(长江出版社) Changjiang Press</u>
Translator	—	<u>Blue Silver Translation</u>
Book designer	—	<u>Armaell</u>